

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

**SANKARA'S TEACHINGS
IN
HIS OWN WORDS**

Swami Atmananda

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI


R. DIWAKAR



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

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What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Sahitya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which is flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form of attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.



Vedanta House,
92, 6th Main Road, Chamarajpete
BANGALORE-18.

आ नो भद्रः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, 1-89-i

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BY

SWAMI ATMANANDA

Vedanta House

92, 6th Main Road, Chamarajwade

BANGALORE-18.

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SRI SANKARA'S TEACHINGS IN HIS OWN WORDS

BY
SWAMI ATMANANDA



1960

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulses of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2/50-.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trails and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself; containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but above all, it has for its core the *Gita* which is as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,

NEW DELHI

3rd October 1951

K. M. MUNSHI

FOREWORD

Many have tried to interpret Sankara-Vichar (the Philosophy of Sankara), some doing so in their own words, while others in those of Sankara himself. This small book of Swami Atmanandaji falls in the second category, though it has its own style, which has presented Sankara the commentator as Sankara the aphorist*. Although a commentator, Sankara is never elaborate without purpose. His notes are the briefest. He gives the purport, in the beginning, in an aphorism-like sentence and elaborates and elucidates the same later. The author has herein tried to pick out some of the aphoristic sentences.

I have not gone through the book critically, but have seen the scheme adopted. It was at my instance that the author added some more Sutras to his original chapter on Upasana which otherwise would have been concluded in fifteen to twenty Sutras. That would, I felt, do injustice to Sankara. The author who appreciated the suggestion wrote out the chapter anew. I am afraid, however, that due to haste, it might not have become so well-knit.

The whole subject has been summed up within three hundred and twenty Sutras*. It is no easy task to confine the ocean-like wisdom of Sankara in a bottle, nor is that the author's claim. Only the salient points are meant to be indicated here. I hope the reader will approach the book from this viewpoint.

With pranams

Nileshwar (Kerala),
16-8-1957.

Vinoba

* Sutra=Aphorism=the statement of the core of a topic in the most terse form.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

During my youth, even before I had read any of the works of Sri Sankara, I was attracted to this fascinating personality who bestrode the intellectual and religious world of his day like a Colossus. A relation of mine whom I used to visit often was a keen student of the Gita and he invited me to read with him Sankara's commentaries on the Gita, which was a daily item in his Parayana. I was spell bound by Sankara's illuminating comments.

Later in 1935, I happened to read the translation of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad by Swami Madhavananda. Some of the thoughts of Sankara seemed so much at variance with current religious beliefs and so much in harmony with modern scientific trends that I decided to compare the translation with the original. The result was amazing. As I could not afford to own either the English translation or the Sanskrit original, I copied out the striking passages in a note book. I used to pore over the passages as often as possible and they were alike an inspiration and a solace to me.

In 1939 I was a guest of Swami Sivananda in his Asram at Rishikesh and in that sacred and congenial atmosphere, I read my host's translation of Sankara's Sutra Bhashya. Here again, I copied out stirring passages. These inspiring quotations were with me when I came to Bombay to attend the historic "Quit India" session of the All India Congress Committee in August 1942 and they sustained me in jail in which I was detained after my return to Trichur. The quiet life of the solitary cell in jail gave me an opportunity to arrange the passes subjectwise.

Many friends to whom I used to read out the passages suggested that they should be printed. I should particularly mention Shri P.M.N. Swamy of the Ramana Samaj, Bombay who suggested that I should write an introduction as well as notes. Swami Krishnananda of Anand Asram, Kanhangad, North

Kerala went through the manuscript and was kind enough to make several suggestions. I am grateful to Shri R. V. Aiyar of Trichur who typed the entire manuscript as a labour of love.

Acharya Vinobaji, the pioneer of Gramdan and a great scholar of Sri Sankara's works, was kind enough to go through the manuscript and express his appreciation. At his instance, I expanded the chapter on Upasana. I cannot express adequately my heartfelt thanks to him for writing at my request a Foreword to the book.

Sri K. M. Munshi suggested the addition of a chapter on the life and achievements of Sankara. I have done so and I am sure it will enhance the value of the book. I am deeply grateful to Kulapati Munshiji for the great interest he has evinced in the publication of this book.

I am beholden to Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar for the characteristically thought-provoking introduction he has written. His comparison of Sankara with Western thinkers will make this book easier for western readers to comprehend. I record my abiding gratitude to Dr. Ramaswami Aiyar for his kindness.

I am grateful to Shri Munshiji and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for having readily agreed to publish the book under their popular 'Book University Series' and for the excellent production values.

If my book encourages people to understand Sankara's teachings and provokes in them a desire for further study of this great saint and savant, I will feel amply rewarded.

Swami Atmananda

Ramana Jayanti Day :
Bombay, 6-1-1958.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ai	...	Bhashya to Aitareyopanishad
Bri.	...	Bhashya to Brihadaranyakopanishad
Cha.	...	Bhashya to Chandogyopanishad
G.	...	Gita Bhashya
Ish.	...	Bhashya to Isavasyopanishad
Ka.	...	Bhashya to Kathopanishad
Ke.	...	Bhashya to Kenopanishad
Ke. V	...	Kena Vakya Bhashya
Ma.	...	Bhashya to Mandukyopanishad
Mu.	...	Bhashya to Mundakopanishad
Pr.	...	Bhashya to Prasnopanishad
S. B.	...	Brahma Sutra Bhashya
Tai.	...	Bhashya to Taittiriyanopanishad

Dedicated
To
My Guru
SWAMI RAMDAS
ANAND ASRAM (KANHANGAD)
South India

P R E F A C E

Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya was almost unique in the history of thought as he combined in himself the attributes of a poet, a logician, a devotee and a mystic as well as being the architect of the monistic system of philosophy that bears his name. He was an inspired 'Kavi' whose appeal was, in turn, to every human feeling and sentiment. His descriptions of nature and his appraisal of human and devine personality reached the summits of art and his command over the 'Navarasas' (नवरस) was superb.

At the same time, in his commentaries on the 'Prasthanathraya' (प्रस्थानत्रय) he displayed a rare faculty of relentlessly logical and concatenated argument and reputation and such subtlety of reasoning as has not been surpassed in the philosophical writings of the world. He vindicated and firmly established the 'Advaita philosophy', which has been described to be one of the supreme achievements of Hinduism. He was, simultaneously, the author of some of the sweetest lyrics like 'Soundarya Lahari' devoted to the adoration of a personal God-head in several manifestations. Within the short compass of 30 and odd years, he travelled throughout India and demonstrated his marvellous organising capacity by the establishment of Mutts in all the four quarters devoted to the continuation of the doctrines he had expounded in his life, by sanyasins, who were to demonstrate in their dedicated lives the efficacy and the practicableness of such teachings.

If one can presume to summarise the main features of his philosophy contained, as they are, in the commentaries

on the 'Gita'; the 'Upanishads' and 'Brahma Sutra' and in such condensed expositions as 'Viveka Chudamani', 'Atmabodha', 'Satasloki', 'Prabodhasudhakara', 'Aparokshanubhuti' and that unequalled compendium of wisdom, the 'Dakshinamurti Stotra', they consist in the affirmation of 'Samsara' or the succession of births and deaths conditioned by 'Karma' and its cosmic significance and the realisation of the essential relativity of phenomena in the context of the reality of the 'Supreme Self', the realisation of that 'Self' not being of a theoretical matter, but in the nature of a direct realisation and actual experience summarised in the saying 'Tatvamasī' (तत्त्वमसि). In his own language, "यस्यैव स्फुरणं सदात्मकमसत्कल्पार्थगं भासते."

Even amongst Indians, there is considerable misapprehension in relation to the real import of Sankara's 'Advaita'. He asserts that the eternal, impersonal 'Brahman' (ब्रह्मन्) is the only ultimate reality. He explains the phenomena of the Universe as due to the power called 'Maya' (माया) by which that absolute, without undergoing any change in or by itself, appears to us as an everchanging succession of phenomena conditioned by time and space. He postulates that the spirit of man is identical with the 'Supreme spirit' and that our sufferings and errors are due to the failure to realise this identity and he further declares that this realisation can procure liberation. One of his chief doctrines is that 'Karma' (work) and 'Upasana' (उपासना) worship are ancillary to 'Jnana' (ज्ञान) or illumination.

Owing to 'Avidya' (अविद्या) according to him, we see diversity where there is unity and many where there is one. Sankara is remarkable for his insistence on knowledge by

investigation and not by the mere acceptance of assertions by others.

“न विद्यते विना ज्ञानं विचारेणान्यसाधनैः”

Sankarā did not teach that the world was unreal or a figment. On the other hand, he was at pains to point out that such an idea of unreality was a part of the Buddhist (Yogachara) doctrine.

It is not well known that in the ‘Padmapurana’ there is a frontal attack on Sankara and his doctrines and the description प्रच्छन्नबौद्ध or ‘Crypto Buddhist’ was applied to Sankara in a passage wherein the Lord Siva is supposed to have declared to the Devi that the theory of ‘Maya’ (माया) is a false doctrine, being a disguised form of Buddhism. Lord Siva adds, “I have myself propounded it in the Kali-yuga taking the form of a Brahmin.”

“मयैव कथितं देवि कलौ ब्राह्मणरूपिणा”

This ‘Purana’ is supposed to stand second in the list of Puranas and in its later sections is strongly Vaishnavite, Siva being supposed to explain to Parvathi, the nature and attributes of Vishnu, whom, they both join in adoring. In its present form the ‘Padma Purana’ is attributed to the 12th Century and it reveals a very common misconception regarding both Sankara and Lord Buddha, the critics forgetting that both the great seers openly took their ideas from the early ‘Upanishads’, though they developed their thesis differently. The main background of the Sankara system is the “Mandukyopanishad” on which Sankara has composed his well-known commentary. The second verse of that Upanishad runs as follows:—

“सर्वं ह्येतत् ब्रह्म अयमात्मा ब्रह्म सोऽयमात्मा”

The only common feature between Buddha and Sankara may be pronounced to be the freedom of both from narrow theological obsessions.

Sankara's conception of the Absolute is not solely a matter of intellectual subtlety. He assumes that the relation of the 'Brahman' with the world is 'Anirvachaneeya' (अनिर्वचनीय)—impossible of explanation. 'Brahman' is attributeless and immutable. 'Isvara' himself, in a sense, is a product of 'Maya' (माया) being the highest approach to the 'Nirguna Brahman' (निर्गुणब्रह्मन्) possible to the individual soul. The world is an apparent transformation through 'Maya' (माया) of the 'Nirguna Brahman' (निर्गुणब्रह्मन्). 'Jiva' (जीव) being, in reality, also all pervading and identical with 'Brahman'. When the 'Jiva' (जीव) is individualised by what are called its 'Upadhis' (उपाधि) accessories or adjuncts, the 'Jiva' (जीव) regards itself as a doer or an agent.

Sankara in his 'Sathasloki' (शतश्लोकी) thus expounds the idea:

जीवात्मब्रह्मभेदं दलयति सहसा यत् प्रकाशैकरूपं

माया तेनैव तस्य क्षयमुपगमिता संसृतेः कारणं या

As to 'Maya' (माया) referred to above, Sankara's argument is somewhat as follows:—"Man's senses may deceive him; his memory may play him false; the forms of the world may be a matter of delusion; the objects of knowledge or perception may be doubted; but the doubter himself cannot be doubted". This position leads to the conclusion that the 'Self' which is composed of the elements of 'Sachchidananda' (सच्चिदानन्द) being Consciousness and bliss.

is universal and infinite, whereas the world of objects is subject to mutation. In other words, the world, as perceived, is as real as the perceiver. In saying this, Sankara differs, as already stated, from the 'Yogachara' tenets of Buddhism.

The world, according to Sankara, is neither non-existing nor void. Its attributes are neither अभाव or शून्य. But, granted all this, the world is not ultimate reality and our confusion arises, because we do not differentiate between the basic 'Atman' (आत्मन्) and the empirical 'Anatman' (अनात्मन्). 'Moksha' (मोक्ष) arises, when the truth is realised. It is not 'Nirvana' (निर्वाण) in the sense of dissolution, but the replacement of a false outlook Avidya (अविद्या) by the true outlook 'Vidya' (विद्या). In the 'Viveka Chudamani', Sankara says 'Deliverance is not achieved by repeating the word 'Brahman' but by directly experiencing 'Brahman'.

Having proceeded so far, Sankara then expounds the view that निराकार absolute becomes आकारवत् (or embodied) for the individual worshipper as a personal or 'Saguna' (सगुण) God, which is the only form in which the absolute can be comprehended by the finite mind. The religion of a personal God is not a mere dogma, but is a product of realisation and experience. As the end of religion is साक्षात्कार (unification), what is termed 'Bhakti' is striving for this साक्षात्कार or realisation by means of a personal God or symbol प्रतीक, which may be an image, a painting or other object^t in nature. It will thus be seen that Sankara does not exclude or expel the frame work of the eternal world. This is an aspect, which is not always understood by those who comment on the 'Vedanta' system.

The truth of 'Brahman' may be mentally or intellectually envisaged. But, inspite of such attempts, there is a deep rooted desire for personal separateness, which is the true 'Avidya (अविद्या)' and the true play of 'Maya' (माया). It creates the notion, "*I am the actor; I am the one who experiences*". This notion is the cause of bondage to conditional existence – birth and death, and this notion can be eradicated only by a strenuous endeavour to live in union with the 'Brahman'. Such eradication is called 'Moksha' (मोक्ष). One of the boldest steps taken by Sankara is the pronouncement that when a man follows the ways of the world, or even the way of tradition (i.e. when he believes in religious rites and the letter of the scriptures), he cannot attain the knowledge of reality, which does not arise until and unless by some path he attains the citadel of ज्ञान (illumination).

It may be observed that similar conceptions and thoughts have occurred to men and women in many other countries and in other ages. St. Catherine of Genoa exclaims, "My 'me' is God, nor do I recognise any other 'me' except God himself" and the Sufi saint Bayazid stated, "I went from 'God' to 'God' until they cried from 'me' in 'me'. Oh thou I"! When some one knocked at the saint's door and asked, "Is Bayazid here?", his answer was, "Is anybody here except God?"

In that remarkable compilation of Aldous Huxley entitled, "Perennial Philosophy" occurs the following passage elucidating the maxims—"That art 'thou'. Behold but *one* in all things. God within and God without." There is a way to reality in and through the world and there is a way to reality in and through the soul. But the best way is that which leads to the "Divine" ground

simultaneously in the perceiver and in that which is perceived.”

The medieval philosopher, Ruysbroeck, has stated, “The image of God is found essentially and personally in all mankind. In this way we are all one, intimately united in our external image, which is the image of God and the source in us of all our life.”

Perhaps, however, one of the nearest approximations to Sankara was manifested in Spinoza. According to him, the totality of all existing things is God (God or nature—‘Dens sine natural’). God is not a cause outside of things, which passes over into things and works upon things from without. He is *immanent*, dwelling within, working from within, penetrating and impregnating all things. In his “Short treatise” he utters the truth as revealed to him. “Nature consists of infinite attributes. To its essence pertains existence. It thus coincides exactly with the essence of God.”

What may be called the “Sankara system” has thus pervaded and influenced not only all aspects of Indian thought, but has had significant repercussions amongst medieval Christian saints, Sufi divines and more recent thinkers like Nietzsche and Schopenhaver. There is, further more, a growing body of scientific thinkers who, confronted by the phenomena and developments of nuclear, atomic and cosmic theories, feel irresistably drawn to Sankara’s enunciations as the most legitimate and satisfactory explanation of the Universe, physical, psychological and para-psychological.

The more one studies the teachings of Sankara and his source books, the ‘Upanishads’ the ‘Brahma Sutra’

and the 'Gita', the more one is struck by the intuitory anticipation by past seers of what are now coming to be regarded as scientific truths. The atomic theory and the existence of a reservoir of incalculable energy in the atoms, the doctrine of conservation of energy and many of the developments of physics, chemistry and biology, regarding the potentialities of the infinitesimally small and the infinitely great, all of them being demonstrated as evolutionary products and transmutations of primal energy, are envisaged in the doctrines of 'Anu' (अणु) or atom of 'Anna' (अन्न) (wrongly identified in many passages with food) and 'Sabda Brahman' (शब्द ब्रह्मन्), the 'Brahman' as manifested severally as vibrations, sound and energy and 'Sakti' (शक्ति).

In 1956 there was published a book entitled "The outlines of Modern Knowledge", to which contributions have been made by the most eminent scientists of today. In an article by Dr. Rhine on "Para Psychology" contributed to this Volume, he says, "Why should we suppose that there could be no kind of energy beyond those that are known; why should it be assumed that all the energies of nature should be subject to time and space and mass relationship and perceptible to the sensory organs of man?" Again, some of the conclusions reached by astronomers and physicists that have culminated in the works of Einstein, Heisenberg, and Nils Bohr and the Curies and men like Sir James Jenes, seem like excerpts from Sankara's exposition of the 'Relativity of Knowledge' and the illusoriness of sensation and experience.

Incidentally, it may be observed that the saying, "यदिदं किञ्च जगत्सर्वं प्राण राजति निःसृतम्" taken in conjunction with the 'Brahma Sutra' aphorism 'कंपनात्' is

the assertion that प्राण or life is a continuous vibration or manifestation of energy operating in the 'Brahman', the circumambient or the 'Supreme Self.'

I have been at some pains to deal with the universality as well as the scientific topicality of Sankara because, in the main, Swami Atmananda has sought, in his very erudite book on "Sri Sankara's Teachings in His Own Words", to develop similar aspects of His works and illustrate the validity of His teachings.

What Sri Vinoba Bhave calls, 'Sankara Vichara', or the philosophy of Sankara, has been expounded in Sankara's own words by the Swamiji and he has, evidently, had the benefit of valuable consultations with Sri Vinoba Bhave.

The object of the treatise is avowedly to introduce the reader to the fundamental aspects of Sri Sankara's teachings. The author observes with justice that the method adopted by Sankara is parallel with the method adopted in Geometry.

The Swami sets out, in Part I, in Sutra form the main thoughts of Sankara and proceeds thereafter to give more elaborate explanations. He claims, that the presentation of these propositions would help a reader to get a hold on the fundamentals of the philosophy. He deals with the subject under four major heads प्रमाण; कर्म; उपासना and ज्ञाननिष्ठा.

There is a succinct and useful account of Sankara's life, the details of which are well known. He draws

pointed attention to the Chandala incident in Varanasi in
(मनिषापञ्चकम्)

“ब्रह्मवाहमिदं जगच्च सकलं चिन्मात्रविस्तारितं
सर्वं चैतदविद्यया त्रिगुणयाऽशेषं मया कल्पितम् ।
इत्थं यस्य दृढा मतिः सुखतरे नित्ये परे निर्मले
चाण्डालोऽस्तु स तु द्विजोऽस्तु गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम॥”

The few verses of this poem contain the essence of Vedantic teaching and an enunciation of the ultimate unity of the Universe that must lead to tolerance and infinite comprehension.

He deals also with Sankara's travel to Assam, one of the pristine homes of the 'Thantra' (तन्त्र) cult. Pointing out that 'Sankara lived in a period of great spiritual crisis, the author declares that the work done by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and the Swami Vivekananda, in the face of modern materialism, was combined in the life history of Sankara, who, in the language of the Swamiji, "was an adept in the process of synthesis as in analysis." Sankara sought to uphold the verities of the 'Gita', 'Brahma Sutra' and the 'Upanishads' by his own commentaries and his attitude towards 'Poorva Mimamsa' and towards 'Mandana Misra' are well brought out by the author and the passages dealing with Sankara's outlook on 'Karma' are illuminating. He rightly points out that the Buddhist approach, not being based on tradition and being essentially academic, ceased to retain the allegiance of the people in India. Sankara flourished at a time, when the Vedic rites and ceremonies had lost their original importance and appropriateness and when temple worship had become universal.

The special glory of Sankara is that, over and above being the protagonist of monistic approach, he is the author of innumerable Stotras as already stated. As the author observes, the 'Jnana' (ज्ञान) of Sankara is not a cold study of books, but a warm-hearted striving to realise the truth, which, when turned towards a personal diety, becomes 'Bhakthi'.

The Swami also endeavours to show that Sankara, while accepting the 'Mimamsa' rules of interpretation regarded the 'Vedas' as explanatory or as revealing the truths but not as 'Karaka' (कारक) or mandatory. Illustrating his remarks by reference to Sankara's 'Bhashya' (भाष्य) on 'Brahma Sutra' and the 'Upa-nishads' he shows that, according to Sankara, the test on the authority of a passage is its capacity to generate fruitful knowledge.

The passages relating to the validity of 'Vedic' dicta and Sankara's controversy with Kapila are also valuable, though recondite.

Chapter II on the 'Karma' or 'Pravritti Marga, (प्रवृत्तिमार्ग) treads familiar ground. But, the portion relating to 'Upasana' (उपासना) and devoted to mental concentration or 'Chittaikagriya' (चित्तैकाग्र्य) is specially valuable.

Sankara is as insistent as Buddha on the supreme importance of lofty ethics as one of the fundamentals of spiritual life, but his outlook on 'Karma', on temple worship and on domestic ceremonial is sympathetic and harmonious and not merely destructive. Students of Hindu Philosophy will be indebted to the

author for the immense trouble he has taken to collate the main axioms of Sankara's teachings linking them by his expository remarks. This volume is veritably a labour of erudition and of love.

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C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the following pages are given typical sayings of Sankara in original with their translation in English with notes where necessary. The sayings have been culled from his commentaries on Prasthanana Trayi (the Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutras) and arranged under various topics. An attempt has been made to follow the psychological sequence.

The aim of Part I (this book) is to introduce the reader to the fundamental aspects of Sankara's teachings in their easiest form, so as to make him comprehend Hinduism in its purest and simplest form. But, in fact, Sankara is so general in his statements that his teachings will profit the followers of all religions equally.

The method adopted by Sankara in establishing the great propositions of religion is almost parallel to that adopted in Geometry. He opens any discussion by stating his proposition first, in the most pithy yet precise form. Using a Sanskrit word, we may state, that he states his case tersely as if in a "Sutra". Then arguments against and for are adduced elaborately, with a wealth of details, and rigorous reasoning. No aspect of the question is left out. Cutting his way straight and sharp through the maze, the propositions are proved to the hilt and established. This portion of the argument forms the elaborate explanation of the initial terse statement or Sutra. Part I contains some of the most important "Sutras" of Sankara with a view to introduce him to the lay reader. The elaborate

explanations are not given here as they will interest only the few serious readers who would like to go into these propositions more fully. They may find their satisfaction in Part II, which it is hoped to publish later.

Sankara has to be known in India itself much more widely. Nothing else will be so life-giving and invigorating to the thinking part of the nation. No better antidote to the prevailing superstitions in the very vital field of religion can be thought of. As all may not have the patience or the grounding required to follow with relish a strict course of reasoning, it has been thought better to place before them the bare bold propositions of Sankara on religion. Sankara should not merely be revered and admired but what is more important is that his thoughts and teachings should be more intimately and authoritatively known.

There is another advantage in presenting the "Sutras" (bare propositions of Sankara) first. It will be like the study of the map of a new city before one goes out to see it actually. This will ensure against the path or the bearing being lost in the mazes of the city. It is better that a hold is obtained on the fundamentals of a subject before one launches oneself into its intricacies. Further, in these days of haste and hurry, a book, small in size yet giving the essential and salient features, will generally be more welcome.

The whole subject has been classified under four major heads:—Pramanas (authority or sources of knowledge); Karma (primarily rituals); Upasana (meditation to achieve prosperity) and Jnana Nishta

(meditation to realise Truth or God). Karma and Upasana constitute the *Pravritti Marga* (the path circling outwards). They are the methods inevitably adopted, while one is in the initial stages of religious experience. Though there is ceaseless activity, that cannot free us from the bonds of slavery to Nature. Here the Devas and even God himself are but the means; one's prosperity and enjoyment the end. Jnana Nishta constitutes the *Nivritti Marga* (the path circling inwards). The man who was till now an extrovert now becomes an introvert. Now God becomes the end. Armed with right knowledge and ethical excellence, the march is straight on to the goal of Atman or God.

The factors and details of Karma, Upasana and Jnana are prescribed by the *Pramanas* which, for Hindu religion, are the *Vedas* or the *Srutis*. This book will serve to throw light on the theory and practice of the Hindu religion. It is fundamental in this context to have a correct idea of the place of the *Sastras*, and of the vital division of the passages of the text into two broad categories as *Vidhis* and *Arthavadas* or as *Vakyas* and *Vakyaseshas*. This is the great contribution of Acharya Jaimini in his *Mimamsa Sastra*.

In regard to practice, the relative values of the three stages of its psychological growth—Karma, Upasana, and Jnana Nishta have to be carefully borne in mind. The stages of Karma and Upasana have to be outgrown to attain to Jnana as one has to outgrow his childhood and boyhood, the inevitable stages in a man's life to attain his manhood. Sankara is a past master both in the theory and art of development of human personality until it bursts its shell of body and

mind and expands into the whole universe. This development of personality is to be attained by *Jnana*, a new superconscious insight. That is why it is called the third eye of Siva, which destroys all ignorance and illusion. That this *Jnana* can be attained by Bhakti or Raja Yoga as well is the firm conviction in the Bhagavad Gita as well as in Sankara.

A few of the sayings recur in more than one chapter or section. These have been repeated in order to make the ideas relating to each section complete.

Swami Atmananda

SANKARA'S LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Sankara's life

The Indian mind is more concerned with Truths than with details relating to personalities; only thoughts of men find recorded but not other facts of personalities. So it has not been possible for historians and literary critics to fix the dates connected with Sankara's life. Telang thinks that Sankara must have lived in the 6th century A. D.; but others assign him to the age of 9th century.

But there is greater unanimity of opinion about certain other incidents of his life. He was born at Kaladi in Kerala State of a Namboodri family. He lost his father early but as he was a precocious boy, he completed his Vedic education and Sanskrit studies very early in life.

Though the Periyar river passing by Kaladi is not infested with crocodiles, the legend connects his Sanyas with a crocodile. Even in early age, Sankara felt the call of Sanyas but his mother was loath to part with her only son, the solace of her widowhood. One day, when the boy and his mother were bathing in that river, Sankara was caught by a crocodile and was about to die. Then he begged his mother to give him permission to assume Sanyas as he was in imminent danger of death. The mother gave her consent. But lo ! A marvel happened. The crocodile released its hold on Sankara. Sankara was now a Sanyasin by mother's consent and left Kaladi in search of a Guru.

He found his Guru on the banks of Narmada in Govinda-Pada, a disciple of the famous Gaud-Pada who had written the famous KARIKA on Mandukya Upanished. By 16, his studies were over and the Guru sent his gifted disciple to Benares to expound the pure and simple Hinduism of the Vedanta.

Recognition

Sankara came to early recognition at Benares. Pupils gathered round him to learn his exposition of Vedanta. It was during his stay at Benares that his commentaries on the Gita, Upanishads and the Brahmasutra of Vyasa came to be written and studied by his pupils. The most famous pupil of this group is Padmapada.

The Chandala incident

Even though an Advaiti who saw all the world as Brahman, one day, due to the force of his ingrained custom as a son of Kerala, he called on a Chandala to move off his path. The Chandala asked him whom he was calling off to move, the body or the soul? This opened the eyes of Sankara and he fell at once at the feet of the Chandala as if he were his Guru, and composed the famous 'Manisha Panchaka' of 5 slokas which have a refrain "he who has learnt to look upon all as Brahman, is really my Guru—be he a Chandala or a Brahmin."

This incident recalls to mind a similar one in Shri Ramakrishna's life. One day Ramakrishna heard a vendor of ice-cream calling out in the street. The vendor was called, but Ramakrishna found him to be a Mohamedan. His birth as a Brahmin instinctively revolted to

buy an eatable from a Mlechcha. So he sent him off, but the deep Advaitic consciousness stung Ramakrishna to the quick and in an instant he recognised his fall from that Supreme Height in his behaviour to wound the Mohamedan vendor. At once he called the vendor back and bought of him.

Such is the force of ingrained habits even after enlightenment.

Paramahansa Parivrajaka

The rest of Sankara's life was spent as a wandering Sanyasin of the highest order, who has transcended all distinctions of caste. All these travels were done with the sole object of preaching and teaching Vedantic religion. He attracted big crowds wherever he went and held discussions with eminent Pandits of other schools of thought. In these discussions his aim was not to win personal victory but to establish Vedantic truth. So he never chose to discredit his opponent and conceded whatever was acceptable to him in their school of thought. But on certain vital points he was unyielding and held his ground with his clear and incisive logic reinforced by Vedic texts if this was a common ground. His travels extended practically over the whole of India, both North and South and East and West. One of the most famous of such encounters with the exponents of other schools of thought was the one with Mandana Mishra, the great exponent of Purva Mimamsa. But this shall be dealt with separately. At last, he consolidated his work by establishing the four Sankar Maths at Badrinath, Puri, Sringeri, and Dwarka.

The funeral of his mother

A small incident serves to reveal his loving heart and his natural human attachments. While parting from his mother he had given her his word that he would respect her wishes that her funeral should be performed by him. He got news of her last illness and was at her bed-side before she passed away. He requested the assistance of his villagers for cremating her dead body but the orthodoxy was as usual blind and unyielding. How could a Sanyasin who had left all Karmas perform his mother's funeral? Even in the present century orthodoxy is no better. Shri Ramana Maharshi performed his mother's funeral on her death at Tiruvannamalai; he was long execrated by the Brahmins of the South for this un-Sastric act.

Sankara cut the body of his mother and took the pieces to the funeral pyre. The cremation had to be done in the corner of the compound of the house. The ruler of the place passed an edict that henceforward all Namboodiris shall have only similar funerals.

Last days

Sankara had many discussions throughout the rest of his life during his travels all over the country. But all his opponents did not take the defeat with equanimity. Towards the end of his life Sankara visited Assam and his opponent was a master of black magic as well. On defeat he exercised his black magic. Sankara got dysentery which would not get cured. But in spite of this Sankara travelled to the other end of India and cast off his body at Kedarnath.

India is one: Sanskrit is the cement

Sankara's life, apart from all other achievements, shows that even in those far off days, all India was one in spite of its many regional languages and varying customs in the matter of dress and food. Is this binding force getting weaker in modern times?

Sankara, born in a corner of South India in Kerala, had his higher education in Central India and established his fame at Benares in North India. Nowhere he went he felt and was treated as a stranger.

In spite of the differences in language, dress, customs, and habits of food, the thought and ideals of India were the same as recorded in Sanskrit. Vedas and Sastras were known and respected everywhere; higher life of man was moulded on these. Sanskrit language was known to the educated throughout India. Education till about a century ago meant familiarity and proficiency with Sanskrit language and literature. Till about two centuries ago man reached his height in every branch of thought and in every walk of life in India as shown by a record of its positive sciences. All these were recorded in Sanskrit and studied in Sanskrit. Sanskrit language and culture was thus the great unifier of India. But for Sanskrit Sankara could not have had his triumphal tours in India and dominated it with his thought.

The need for his thought is not yet exhausted. They have to permeate India once more, nay, spread farther throughout the World.

II. SANKARA'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Sankara and Shri Ramakrishna

There would be few in India who would not have heard of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his great and famous disciple Swami Vivekananda who carried the trumpet call of the Vedanta to the farthest corners of the foreign lands. They were born at a time of spiritual crisis in Hinduism, when the Indian intelligentsia in the middle of 19th century felt like being between the devil and the deep sea.

The material science, the great advance in Physics and chemistry, and rationalism had dominated the imagination of the West and, later on, of educated India. Science and reason then found no necessity for God. It became a fashion to be an agnostic if not an atheist. But if, for any reason, one thought that religion had a place in life, Hinduism was the one least fitted to guide and sway one's life. Christianity was the religion, the religion of men who ruled not merely India but other parts of the world as well. Hinduism consisted of a bundle of superstitious practices like idol worship, caste, inequality, injustice, untouchability, suppression of women etc. It was fatalistic. Such a religion had no chance against the conquering Christianity, with its preaching of fraternity and equality and the easy access to the Gods's presence. When the people of India were in the grip of this crisis, Ramakrishna came to the rescue. He showed people the heart of the Hindu religion in his own person. Yoga and Vedanta were not the fabrications of scheming Brahmins but held the great

message of India to the world, that "man is essentially divine." Ramakrishna proved this truth in his life and his great disciple not only assimilated it but carried this great message to the whole world. That is the great significance of the life of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

Sri Sankara

Sri Sankara was, in fact, Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda rolled into one. He lived in all a life of 32 years, while the combined life of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda was about 64 years. Sri Sankara did achieve the work of both in a more intensive manner in half their life-time. Further, Sankara lived in an age when the only means of locomotion was by walking or with the aid of a bullock-cart. The marvellous achievements of Shri Sankara can be properly appraised by the modern world only in the light of the joint lives of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

Sankara's time

Sankara's time also was a period of great spiritual crisis in India. It was more than thousand years since the blessed Lord Buddha had walked and preached his message of compassion and the Supremacy of Ethics. In fact, he preached the purest form of Hinduism as recorded in the Upanishads. He spoke of Dharma and Sangha but not of God. He discarded the restrictions of Varnashrama and admitted all into his fold irrespective of caste distinctions. In the course of the centuries following Buddha, Buddhists

had evolved rigorous logic to defend their thought and rid themselves of superstitions. Buddha did not speak of God. Their logic did not feel the necessity for God. In this, they too were like the thinkers and scientists of the 19th century, rationalists and atheists. But the masses among the Buddhists could not absorb any of this reason or atheism. They knew Buddha and they worshipped him as God. Gigantic idols of Buddha came into existence and were worshipped with great pomp and splendour. Buddhist Jataka stories became the popular fare. Grovelling superstitions gained currency and the Buddhistic monks turned themselves into priests for these new ceremonies and the exponents of the Jataka stories. The spiritual life among the Buddhists was at a low ebb; the vigour and purity of the Blessed Lord had evaporated from their midst.

Revival of Hinduism

This was the opportunity for the revival of Hinduism. The Hindu thinkers availed themselves of this favourable opportunity. The fountain-head of Hindu religion was the Vedas and a new life was given to the teachings of the Vedas by Jaimini and his follower Kumarilabhata. The Vedic religion was codified into the Sutras of the Purva Mimamsa and the Vedic rituals and sacrifices once more gained a position of honour and spread among the masses. As they won their admiration, Kumarilabhata aimed at beating the Buddhists at their own game. He learnt logic under a great Buddhist master and defended

the Vedas with that logic. For the Hindu masses who could not stand the logic, he prescribed sacrifices in their most exaggerated forms.

Thus, at this time, just before the advent of Sankara, India also was in a great spiritual crisis and dryness. The people, able to think, were caught between the Buddhistic logic and atheism on the one hand and the subtle interpretation of the Mimamsa on the other; the masses were caught between Hindu Puranas and the Buddhistic Jataka stories, or gorgeous ceremonies before the image of Buddha or the elaborations of the Vedic sacrifice. A spiritual insight was conspicuous by its absence. Such was the atmosphere in India that called forth a Sankara.

Sankara

Sankara was a mystic, a philosopher and a poet-all rolled into one. The Upanishads were not to him as to Shri Ramakrishna the fabrication of wonderful brains. They were to him the genuine records of mystic experiences beyond the senses and the mind. Like Ramakrishna, he had these experiences himself. The Upanishads served but to confirm these. He built his whole philosophy on this solid rock of experience and could easily roam in the fairfields of the Upanishads. He was an infant prodigy. He knew all the four Vedas and Vedangas at a very early age. He mastered the six systems of Indian philosophy and knew the strength and weakness of each system. As became a mystic, he had poetic genius. Unlike Shri Ramakrishna, he did not shrink from any study for

he had to play the role of Vivekananda as well who was always an up-to-date scholar of his times and a devourer of Encyclopedia Britannica even.

Sankara and Buddha

The whole world admits the wonderful compassion of the Buddha. It is too well-known to be expatiated here. But it has to be emphasised that Sankara too had a most compassionate heart. It was not a helpless goat that moved his heart. It was the misery of man caused by his ignorance that moved him and made him wander to all the four corners of India like a man possessed. Man did not know the invaluable mine of bliss in himself but was, in utter ignorance, making frantic efforts to clutch for bliss from outside, and thinking that wealth, woman, name and fame or a far off heaven will give him happiness. Sankara found that he was himself the fountain of bliss and that this was an inheritance to be claimed by all. Man is ignorant of this truth and running after a will-o-the-wisp. Sankara's heart was bleeding that man would not claim his inheritance. So he decided that for the rest of his life he would try his best to convince man of his rich inheritance in himself. Vivekananda spent the last eight years of his time wandering over America, Europe and India with the same precious message. Sankara too spent the last eight years of his life wandering all over India from Kashmir and Badri in the north to Kerala and Kanchi in the south and from Assam in the east to Dwaraka in the west. These he did, not in the days of travel facilities of 19th century, but in the dark days of the

eighth or ninth centuries. Would he have wandered like man possessed, unless he had felt for the deep miseries that suffered in vain, when it could be prevented by right knowledge and a practice based on it?

Sankara, typical of Hindu Genius

Trained in Yoga, Sankara was as great an adept in synthesis as in analysis. He had analysed the malady of the people of his day but he must discover the remedy and apply it. This he has done in a wonderful manner.

As has been stated, he had mastered the four Vedas and the six Darsanas and his prescription must be based on the national inheritance. The intellectual basis for his action should be built on the Vedas. But the heart of the Vedas was the Upanishads and the Gita, the compendium of the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras. As becomes a great synthesiser and a psychologist, he would not frighten people by producing something strange. He would give the people their own beloved books but with most satisfying explanations.

So his scheme was to uphold the Upanishads, the Gita and the Brahma Sutras of Vyasa, by his own commentaries. The people were won over as Sankara was the most brilliant supporter of the Vedas, so adored by them all.

But in the course of his commentaries on these most prized books, he used his surgical knife of reason and experience as he did on all the other

systems. The two systems, Nyaya and Vaisheshika, are spoken of as the one Nyaya system, the system on Logic of the Hindus. This had evolved a wonderful technique of logic. This was mastered by him and used by him not only in the discussions he held with Pandits all over India but also in his own commentaries. But he boldly held that logic alone would not lead to truth. The bases of logic are observed facts, and observation is by the five senses. But there is a sphere beyond the senses and mind just as the present-day atom is a subtle thing beyond the senses but not beyond the mind. The superconscious truths are beyond logic and thus he set a limit to the sphere of logic.

He accepted a great portion of the psychology of the Sankhya and the Yoga systems and recommended Yoga as an aid to meditation. But he held that the plurality of souls maintained by these sages was contrary to the Vedas and invalid to this extent. This was an honour to the Vedas, though it be at the expense of these two great systems.

Sankara and Mandana

He dealt with Purva Mimamsa not merely theoretically in his commentaries but also concretely so as to be seen even by the meanest intellect.

The greatest exponent of Purva Mimamsa of his day was Kumarilabhatta, a famous commentator on Purva Mimamsa. Sankara wished to meet him and have discussion with him, but it was too late. Bhatta was doing Prayaschitta for becoming a disciple of

Buddhist teaching by deliberately burning himself in a big fire of chaff and husk. So Bhatta recommended him to his brother-in-law Mandana Mishra.

Sankara met Mandana Mishra at Mahishmati and there was a long discussion for over 18 days at which Bharati, wife of Mandana was the umpire. Mandana had to acknowledge defeat and in his wife's presence renounce the Grihastshram (house holdership) and take to Sanyas.

What can be more convincing to people than this that the Vedic Karmas, however good they may be, are not sufficient and efficient to lead man to the final goal ?

The intellectual argument against Karma is very simple. Karma is action and every action produces results. Karmas are finite and their results too are finite. So how can Karma produce infinite bliss, the objective of man ? Another aspect of Karma has to be noted. What is created by man by his action is bound to get destroyed. So how can Karma give indestructible bliss ?

Here we see the supreme power of analysis of Sankara. But his power of synthesis was even greater. On this above mentioned ground of destructibility of Karma, Sankara did not advocate the logical step of the abolition of all Vedic Karmas. Any attack on this most sensitive part of the Hindu viz. his deference to the vedas, especially, in the days of Vedic revivalism against the Buddhists, would have been most unpopular. So the Vedic Karmas were to

be performed by those who desired the results of these Karmas and did not care for eternal bliss.

But Sankara's genius recognised a more fundamental reason for retaining Karmas, which the Buddhists had not understood and which consequently brought ruin on their heads. Even though Buddha and his followers taught the 8 gold rules of conduct, the common masses could not feel enthusiasm about these alone. So came about the gorgeous worship of the mighty Buddha images. Sankara understood this well. Sankara said that the Vedas have two parts, the Karma Kanda and the Jnana Kanda. Both are equally valid. He further contended that the Mimamsakas were wrong in stating that Karma Kanda alone is valid. Both have to be accepted. Those who do not feel an inclination for Jnana practices need not, however, take it up. They may take up Karma Kanda and perform action. Action is the very nature of man, and not merely of children. So Sankara preached that both Karma Kanda as well as Jnana Kanda should be accepted by all the Hindus; only each has its own appropriate time. The days of Karma were over for Mandana Mishra. So it was but proper that he should take the next higher step of the practice of Jnana, i. e. concentration with self-control. So Mandana Mishra became his great disciple, Sureshwaracharya, the first head of the Sringeri Math. The greatest glory and act of synthesis of Sankara was the winning over of Mandana. Mandana first met Sankara with great scorn and treated him with contempt. But at last he became the ardent disciple of Sankara. The British first treated Gandhiji, another

typical Hindu, also with contempt and disrespect. The power of synthesis of the Hindu with his great knowledge of man and the world at last triumphed. The British became friends of Gandhiji in the end.

Sankara's Contribution

Sankara's contribution to the world of thought was indeed very great ; in fact, he was a living embodiment of the teaching of the Gita.

Sankara too like the Gita analysed the thoughts of the Upanishads and disclosed the two strata of thought in it. The passages relating to Karma are meant for the beginners of spirituality. The Karmis, great superiority over materialists is that that the ritualists believe in powers higher than themselves. They are partially correct and partially wrong. They recognise instinctively higher powers. So far they are right. But they think that the higher powers are outside themselves while, in fact, they are but in their own higher selves. And consistent with their thinking, they worship the outside gods to help them as the gods are more powerful and so could help them. So Karma is a psychological necessity to them and based on the partial perception of this truth. So Karmas will remain with man, only they must be purified from time to time; old forms like our bodies become effete. So new forms are created. Yajnas give place to temple worship.

Panchayatana Puja

Sankara encouraged, therefore, such of the Vedic rites as did not involve animal sacrifice and some forms of Upasanas like the Pranava Vidya.

But temple and worship of deities had come into the Hindu fold also, rivalling the Buddhistic shrine. Many new and obnoxious cults also, like the hideous worship of Bhairava, Shakti and Ganapathi, had come into vogue but had taken most gross and revolting forms. Here also Sankara used both his power of analysis and synthesis. He showed that the practices offended the best principles of Vedic worship and were to be given up. Pure forms were substituted in the place of the vicious ones; along with these three Gods mentioned above, the old Murthies, Shiva and Vishnu were also being worshipped. Sankara instituted the worship of all these five Gods, Sun, Ambika, Vishnu, Ganapathi and Shiva all on the same pedestal. This emphasised the idea that these are not five different Gods, but they are the one God worshipped in five different forms in different parts of India, each individual choosing according to his bent. Some wrongly think Sankara taught only Jnana and had no place for Karma. Sankara held that the place of Jnana was all important but he knew equally well that many could not give up Karma and they should be taught the most beneficial forms of Karma. Thus it is the Panchayatana Puja (the worship of five Gods) came into vogue in Smartha homes. The other name for this is Shiva-Puja.

His great commentaries

Sankara's commentaries on the Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra of Vyasa are his greatest contribution to the world of philosophical thought and higher religious study. These should not be

mistaken for works on Theology, though they are written as commentaries on Scriptural texts. The adoption of this form was to impress the people of those times, who were so much wedded to the Vedas, that he was not departing from the path of the Rishis, as Buddha did in the people's eyes. They contain elucidation of fundamental philosophical and religious principles in short and neat compass, so that the main trend of the Vedas are not missed in a forest of words and bewilderingly different practices.

Further, his exposure of the weakness of the five other systems of philosophy came in, in their appropriate places and occasions. But he accepted the techniques evolved by each school for investigation of truth; no system has been outrightly rejected by him. Only their faults have been exposed, and pointed out to enable man to take to the right path,

Estab'ishment of Maths

For the preservation and propagation of his teachings, Sankara established Maths almost in the four corners in India, at Badri in the Himalayas, at Puri in Orissa, at Sringeri in the South and Dwaraka in Gujarat in West. That these Maths function even to this day shows the vigour of the movement for the propagation of Vedanta started by Sankara. Sankara though born in the south had an all-India view-point. So the Maths were located to serve all parts of India. Sankara's action in this respect corresponds to that of Vivekananda again, who created the Ramakrishna Order and established the Belur and Mayavati Maths before he passed away.

Sankara has a modern scientific mind

Sankara though he lived at least 12 centuries ago has a most modern and scientific outlook. Even though he seems to swear along with the Mimamsakas by the Vedas, it has to be clearly understood that he has the greatest freedom from theological obsession. The one statement that he wants man to believe from the Vedas is the statement that "soul is potentially divine". Religion to him consists in bringing out this divinity of man latent in him. With him, as to others in other religions, this divinity of man, though hidden from the senses of man, is an obstinate fact of the super-consciousness. Sankara defines Jnana "as dependent on the object" and not on the hallucinations of the Sadhaka's mind. 16025

The potentiality of the atom when first enunciated by Einstein was hard to believe. Even then it was not a hallucination of Einstein. Later on, experiments proved it true. Perhaps, it has been proved tragically true to the world by the horrible Atom Bomb. Sankara's idea of the divinity of the human personality can be compared to Einstein's idea of the potentiality of the atom. Sankara says that this statement relates to an already existing thing, but not perceived now but which can be verified and experienced by proper discipline of the mind. Thus, he has quite a modern scientific attitude. All problems treated by him have been viewed by him from this high standpoint of experiment and verification for oneself.

But the object of the experiment here is not a thing outside in the world but it is in oneself.

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One's own mind is the great laboratory. The scientist too has not to be tossed by passions if he is to have a clear vision ; he has to cultivate high concentraion as well as freedom from passions. Then he will be able to verify the truth in himself. Sankara challenges those who want to question this statement of the Vedas to this course of discipline before it can be verified. An astronomer has to train himself to the use of the telescope and even to use more and more powerful telescopes before he can observe the heavens. But if anyone tells the astromer that all his statements about stars and heavens are all his hallucinations unless the astronomer can make him see these things with his naked eyes he will only be laughed at as an ignorant man.

A similar readiness to undergo discipline in purity and concentration is a pre-requisite for the realisation of this great spiritual truth. This is the message of Sankara for the modern world. Divinity of man exists in him already; Man, by his efforts, has to remove the veil that hides this reality.

According to Sankara all the rest of the Vedas may be ignored by one if he so chooses. But none striving for a spiritual life can ignore this grand truth of the divinity of the soul, and the preliminary discipline to come by this grand possession in himself. Going to heavens etc. may be questioned but not attaining to divinity of the soul in oneself.

Sankara was many-sided

There is a tendency among the scholars to associate Sankara with Jnana alone. This is doing a

great injustice to him. No doubt, even to this day, Sankara is the most excellent propounder of the Jnana Yoga. But that was only a part of his work and himself.

Sankara has not merely written the commentaries on Prasthanatraya (the three basic works) but he is the author of innumerable Stotras of great poetic excellence and of feeling for and devotion to God. These are perhaps more popular among the people of India than are his commentaries. Sankara characterises Jnana Nishtha itself as an extreme ardour towards realisation of the soul. The Jnani has to be full of feeling, and emotion and avidity to realise the truth. Jnana of Sankara is never a cold study of books or cleverness in discussing Sastras. It is a warm-hearted attempt and striving to realise the truth. When this attitude is turned towards the personal god, it becomes Bhakti. To think of Sankara as all-Jnana and no-Bhakti is to misjudge him and ignore a good deal of his most popular Stotras.

Another charge that is made against Sankara is that he was against all Karma, Sankara has no doubt stated the rituals and Jnana run on opposite directions. But he was for all-Yatna (intense striving) to conquer the mind. He was for all-effort to relieve the ignorance of men, man's greatest enemy. All the last sixteen years of his life were devoted exclusively for this service of man by means of Jnana. He was as good a Karma Yogin as Buddha himself. His life was, in fact, a complete synthesis of Jnana, Bhakti, and Karma Yogas as the Gita is. He was a complete demonstration of the teachings of Gita.

Sankara is perhaps one of the least understood of the great Acharyas even among the Sanskrit-knowing public. But because of his strictly scientific attitude of mind, his deep grasp of the fundamentals of religion and lucid exposition, he is the one Acharya who will easily appeal to the modern mind. In the interests of pure religion, not merely of Hinduism, it is necessary that this modern age should read and understand him better.

He is one of the boldest thinkers the world has ever known. In the course of his meticulous exposition of the nature of the Eternal Truth, he seems merciless in his exposure of the foibles of the popular Hindu religion of his times. His one endeavour was to bring out the fundamentals of the Hindu religion out of the tangled web of Hindu religious literature. He has a most comprehensive and elevated view of the human personality. Even in his eagerness to bring to the limelight the higher but hidden aspects of his personality, he never forgets that the common man is on the merciless grip of his lower nature. So he comes down to the level of the common man to raise him up.

Ethics superior to Rituals

While allowing for rituals, their indispensable place in the childhood of a religious life, he was uncompromising in his insistence that only on the basis of strict and advanced ethical life can the super-structure of spiritual or religious life of realization of God or the Self be built up. Rituals and Swadharma are the essential atmosphere for the practice of detachment. But performance of rituals as such does not lead to this detachment; there is

a method of doing it in a proper attitude of mind which helps to evolve this detachment. This in turn paves the way for an easy ethical life.

Sankara's Synthetic Genius

Sankara has in a full measure the characteristic genius of the Hindu to assimilate and absorb whatever is health-giving in the atmosphere about him. Mimamsakas, in their enthusiasm for rituals which were regarded by them as their Kamadhenu, characterized the Upanishads as mere Arthavada (panegyrics) necessary to emphasise the importance of rituals, but leading to no independent thought. Sankara in his admiration for the Vedanta was not oblivious of the achievements of the Mimamsakas in the science of interpretation of the Vedic texts.

One of the great glories of the Hindu religious thinkers was that, though they all based their Siddhantas on the authority of the Vedas, they were not fundamentalists like the followers of the Bible or Koran. No school of Hindu religious thought accepted the necessity to regard every sentence of the Vedas as equally authoritative and so to be justified to the people. They classified Vedic sentences into two broad categories: (1) Vidhi (commands or injunctions) and (2) Vidhishesha and Arthavada (supplements of panegyrics). This original and bold conception saved them from many of the pitfalls of the fundamentalists of other religions.

I fear many of us Hindus, who are naturally devoted to all kinds of our own Scriptures, do not understand or realize the very existence and much less the importance of this basic principle of interpretation. So we are misled to believe that every sentence of the Vedas has to be justified

at its face value. We forget that Jaimini, who is still the Acharya for most of us and who built up his edifice of ritualism on the sheer authority of the Vedas, regarded the whole body of the Mantras and all the Upanishads as Vidhishesha or Arthavada. According to him, the statements and propositions in the hymns and the Upanishads need not be taken seriously at their face value. They are there only in some way to subserve the text on rituals. This led Jaimini into the pitfall of ignoring the grand thought and life taught by Vedanta. While we also follow Jaimini into the pit, we forget the great lesson that he taught in regard to the texts. We forget that later religious literature, the Itihasas, Puranas and others, do abound in Arthavadas and are not to be given a uniform authoritativeness.

Sankara accepted this division and most of the other rules of interpretation forged by Jaimini. But his view of the Vedas was fundamentally different. Sankara regarded the Vedas as Jnapaka or revealing the truths while Jaimini recognized them as Karaka or mandatory with dire consequences on disobedience. But while Jaimini's view leads to exclusion of the hymns and the Upanishads, Sankara's comprehended all parts of the Vedas alike in its scope. Both Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda were equally authoritative. Another vital difference between the Acharyas in the canons of interpretation was the test of *Pramanya*. Sankara's test on this runs as follows:—

न वाक्यस्य वस्त्वन्वाख्यानं क्रियान्वाख्यानं वा प्रामाण्यकारणम् ।
किं तर्हिऽनिश्चितफलवद्विज्ञानोत्पादकत्वम् ।

तद्यत्रास्ति तत्प्रमाणवाक्यम् । यत्र नास्ति तदप्रमाणम् ॥

(Bhasya on Br. Up. I. iv. 7)

“The test of the authority or otherwise of a passage is not whether it states a fact or an action but its capacity to generate certain and fruitful knowledge. A passage that has this is authoritative; while the one that lacks it is not.” This test, again, is beautifully comprehensive and inclusive; Jaimini’s test included only the injunction of Karma Kanda. Sankara’s test includes these injunctions of Karma Kanda as well as the emphatic assertions of Jnana Kanda. These are admirable instances of Sankara’s genius for the synthesis of differing ideologies.

But Sankara’s penetrating intellect knew where to stop in this synthesis or inclusion of ideas; he emphatically demolished the Siddhanta of Jaimini that Karma alone and by itself was the Kamadhenu in religious life. But, as already stated above, he accepts that it had its inevitable place in the early stage of the religious or spiritual growth of man. Here is a good instance of his catholicity. Similar was his relationship with the other four Darsanas. The technique evolved or adumbrated by other famous schools of thought was mostly accepted, nay, used by him in his exposition of Vedanta; but the untenable Siddhantas or conclusions were exploded without mercy.

His Scientific Attitude

But what will appeal most to the modern man is Sankara’s strictly scientific attitude to religion. The ambition of science is to reveal the truths of the external nature; the field of religion is the disclosure of the still more marvellous truths of the internal nature of man. Sankara is a master-expounder of

the latter. The science of today has in a sense become transcendental; but naturally its field is the outside world. The most important domain of the present day science is the mighty atom, far beyond the ken of senses of man. Science has become less dogmatic than it was in the 19th century, one is not sure to what more subtle depths it may be taken.

In a similar manner the special field of exploration of our Rishis was the inner man, his consciousness. But this was also transcended. The Scriptures reveal the truths relating to the super-consciousness in ourselves and ultimately of the whole universe. As illustrated by the life of Mahatma Gandhi, soul force is even mightier than the explosive force of the atom. We are glad that the more thoughtful in all the nations are now in a mood to listen to and think about the great truth of the Atma.

The marvellous feat of Sankara is that he has tested the truths of religion by the very same standards as have been adopted by science. The two tests of science are that it can be verified, and that it is universal. Sankara states that the culmination of religious i. e. ethical discipline is the experience or realization of the Self or the Supreme here and now".

“अनुभवादयश्च यथासंभवं इह प्रमाणम् । ”

“अनुभावसानत्वाद् भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात् च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य । ”

“It is true because of one's own experience”.
 “Brahmajnana is the experience of an existing entity as the culmination of a course of discipline”. He

says that this realization is in glaring contrast to the "attainment of Heaven by means of sacrifice". The attainment of Heaven has to be accepted merely on the authority of the Vedas. It cannot be experienced here and now. So doubts about its reality are not quite out of place.

But the experience of the Self is not easy. Even in the intellectual sphere the theory of Relativity is beyond the comprehension of 99% of the educated or intelligent people. A comprehension of this difficulty must make it plain why the more subtle experience of the realization of the Self or God is beyond the depths of 99.99% of the people. There are not many Einsteins nor are there many Ramakrishna Paramahamsas or Ramana Maharshis.

Another characteristic of science is that a scientific phenomenon is not unique but universal. If an atom can be split in America, Americans are easily prepared to concede that Russians too can split it. Christians believe that Christ is unique. He is a 'न भूतो न भविष्यति' Mohammedans think Mohamed is the one Prophet; he is unique. According to Sankara, these are but examples of realized souls and there is to be repetition of such prophets. Only these must have gone through a severe course of ethical discipline and, by their intensive purity and concentration, transcended the bounds of ordinary consciousness.

Thus Sankara brings to bear quite a scientific mind in his exposition of religion. Even though he lived in what may be termed as the medieval times, he is more modern than many of the modern

scientists in his conception and treatment of religion. There is nothing to be wondered at if Sankara is not properly known in Europe or America. But the great pity is that his excellence is not realised in his own land of Bharatavarsha.

So a humble attempt is being made to place before the readers his ideas on many aspects of religion in his own words.

Why not understood ?

Two causes have contributed to the prevailing state of ignorance regarding Sankara's teachings.

The standard works of Sankara are his commentaries on the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* and the *Bramha--Sutras*. The traditional way of learning permitted the study of these only after a fairly elaborate course of study of Sahitya (Literature), Vyakarana (Grammar), Nyaya (Logic) and Mimamsa. It cannot be denied that a fair grasp of their technique is no doubt necessary for the comprehension of Sankara's Bhasyas on the Prasthanatraya. But in this scheme of studies two serious mishaps happen. In studying these auxiliaries many theories, put forth by these Sastras on serious problems and which have been exploded by Sankara, are accepted as gospel truths by the beginner. How Mimamsa is dangerously misleading in two or more important matters has been shown above. Secondly, often enough the Sanskrit study ends with these auxiliaries or their higher studies and Vedanta is not taken up at all, with the

result that the students of Sanskrit are not benefited by the flood of light thrown by Sankara on these exploded topics.

Another disadvantage to a student of Vedanta is that Sankara has given his expositions of many serious subjects and propositions while commenting on the text of these great books. No one can find out easily where an important topic has been dealt with. The methods adopted by Sankara has thus no correspondence to the systematic and logical development of successive topics that we are accustomed to in great modern philosophical or even scientific works. Even so, the fundamental propositions of Sankara, which are his own contributions to the Indian philosophical thought, lie like a needle in a haystack.

It would be a service to the world of religion and philosophy if these thoughts are picked up and given in a systematic manner in his own words. My humble effort is to render this service.

It would be a greater service to the beginners of a study of religion and philosophy in general and Hindu thought in particular that his marvellous yet simple conceptions on the fundamentals of this important subject are placed before them as the first subject of study even before their thoughts are warped by exploded theories of other famous and popular thinkers. The weapons forged by these latter teachers are indeed very useful for a clear grasp of the Sanskrit Sastric literature; but the fact still remains that their

Siddhantas (conclusions) have not stood the test of Sankara and so could much less stand the onslaughts of modern science. Sankara's Siddhantas can successfully withstand these.



CHAPTER I

PRAMANAS AND THE PLACE OF SCRIPTURES

INTRODUCTION

Ordinarily a man is familiar with only two Pramanas or sources of knowledge: Pratyaksha (direct experience gained through the senses) and Anumana (reasoning or logic. Modern science also does not accept any more. But all religions alike claim as their basis the Revelation or Sabda (oral instruction). Sankara gives full weight to each of these three.

But Sankara does not touch anything which he does not illumine. He declares that the three Pramanas are complementary and never conflicting; each furnishes us with knowledge of the universe which the other two are not able to give. Each is a complete authority in its own sphere but is impotent in the spheres of the other two. Sankara posits a field beyond Pratyaksha and Anumana, beyond sense-experience and reason; the Vedas or Sabda furnish us with the knowledge of the super-conscious sphere. The sub-conscious sphere is the source of instincts of man and animals.

He contends that the Vedas are no authority in the sphere of sense-knowledge even though Vedas may contain records of Pratyaksha. In no case can it supersede our direct experience nor contradict reason. So according to Sankara, Sastras or the Vedas supplement science and can never come into conflict with it nor supplant it.

Veda not the "Command" of God

Another daring proposition of Sankara may shock rudely the popular idea prevalent not merely among the Hindus but also among all other religions as well. His proposition is that the Scriptures or the Vedas are not the "command" of God and so are not mandatory. His dictum is that the Vedas are Jnapaka and not Karaka; they reveal and do not command. The Vedas reveal superconscious truths as science reveals the truths of the world of senses. Man may make use of this knowledge and be the richer for it; else he may continue to be the animal that he is.

Just as the ear can but hear and the eye see, but each cannot take up the work of the other, so do the Vedas convey knowledge in a sphere different from that of science. They are in fact complementary as already stated. So if the world will be content with the gains from science alone, the world will be a big loser. Such a world, choosing voluntarily to be blind, will deny itself the treasures of the world of spirit. The world refusing to go beyond science has been confronted by the monster of the Atom Bomb.

It is remarkable that, unlike other religious teachers, Sankara has based many of his important propositions like Adhyasa (super-imposition), limitations of Karma, and the power and efficiency of Jnana on Drishta (ordinary experience) and not on the Vedas. The one and perhaps the only one proposition that he asks us to believe on the authority of

the Vedas, is the *identity of the self with Brahman* and its corollary Sarvatmabhava, that Atman is one with the whole universe.

He wants us to begin with belief but to end, as science does, with experience. What is accepted from the Vedas as a working theory is to be verified in one's own life. The means prescribed is a life of absolute purity and intensive meditation out of eagerness for Truth. The Truth is not to be created by our practice; it is there already; purity and meditation wear away our spiritual blindness; the omni-present and effulgent Truth then shines in our hearts. [Sankara has, in fact, made other contributions to Mimamsa (science of interpreting texts), besides what has been referred to above. It is sad to state that they have not yet been popularly recognised and appreciated; only a few of these have been dealt with in this chapter].

The three Pramanas accepted alike by the Six Schools of Indian philosophy (Shad Darsana) are (1) direct sense perception called Pratyaksha, (2) reason called Anumana and (3) Sabda (sound) or Sruti (what is heard).

The art of writing had not come into vogue in ancient times. The spiritual experiences of the Rishis were transmitted to posterity orally by the medium of words (Sabda or sound) and these constitute the Vedas. So the Vedas were called Sabda (sound uttered by one) and also Sruti (sound heard by the other).

The Vedas were very rigorously preserved and orally handed down; this is the practice even today. But the Vedas have come in print in the last one century or so.

Pramanas in General

१. न च दृष्टे अनुपपन्ने नाम, दृष्टत्वात् एव ।

S. B. 4-1-2 Br. 4-3-6.

Facts of perception cannot be challenged on the ground of improbability because they have been perceived.

Note:

When the sense experience is valid, it cannot be questioned. The most proper thing is to accept facts. Arguments are, in fact, based on facts. Even the Vedas cannot controvert direct experience.

२. न हि प्रत्यक्षं अनुमानेन बाधितुं शक्यते ।

Br. 4-3-6.

Certainly perception cannot be nullified by inference.

३. न च अनुमानं प्रत्यक्षविरोधे प्रामाण्यं लभते ।

Br. 2-1-20.

An inference is no authority as against perception.

Note:

A famous story from the life of Galileo will be a good illustration of Pratyaksha Pramana as against Anumana and will make the meaning clear. There was a dispute among learned scholars of Galileo's times as to whether a dead fish or a living fish would reach the ground sooner when dropped from the top of a tower. The dispute raged long and fierce. Young Galileo was a witness to the unceasing battle

of words. He got up the "leaning tower of Pisa" with two fishes, one living and the other dead, and dropped them down simultaneously. The scholars perceived that both touched the ground at the same time. Their perception (Pratyaksha) silenced them. Their reasoning (inference) had no further use on the matter under controversy.

४. स्वविषयशूराणि हि प्रमाणानि श्रोत्रादिवत् ।

Br. II. 1-20.

The means of knowledge are powerful in their own respective spheres like ear etc.

Note:

The ear can hear but not see. The eye can see but not hear. Each organ gives the knowledge of a different phase of the world. This is an analogy to better comprehend Nos. ९ए 9(a) and ९बी 9(b). As the eye, nose and ear have different spheres of knowledge, so also all the three Pramanas (perception, reasoning and Sabda) have distinctly different spheres. Sabda or Sruti does not refer to anything within the sphere of the senses or reason. Conversely, an express Vedic statement, even when it seems to contradict experience or reason, *has* to be accepted as its sphere transcends these two. See No. 17.

५. न च प्रमाणं प्रमाणान्तरेण विरुद्ध्यते ।

Br. II-20.

And one means of knowledge does not contradict another.

Note:

Eyes, nose, ear, etc. do not contradict each other. They are in fact supplementary. Man has a richer experience of the world because of the five senses. If one of them is not there, he is the poorer for it. Similarly, Sabdapramana deals with a sphere different from that of the other two. These are to be taken as supplementing one another and not contradicting each other. Sabda may seem to contradict but it is not really so.

६. प्रमाणान्तराविषयमेव प्रमाणान्तरं ज्ञापयति ।

Br. II-20.

The scope of one source of knowledge is what is not within the scope of other sources of knowledge.

७. श्रुतिविरोधे न्यायाभासत्वोपगमात् ।

Br. IV-3-22.

Any reasoning that contradicts the Sruti is a fallacy.

Notes:

Valldity of a sruti statement cannot be questioned, not only by the senses but by reason also. The sphere of reason is within consciousness while that of the Vedas is above it.

Sabda Pramana (Vedas)—its Scope

८. स्वयत् तोऽप्राप्तं तच्छास्त्रेण बोधितव्यम् ।

Ai. Intro.

What is not automatically or naturally known has to be instructed by Sastra.

Note:

This will apply even to our books on science; they convey information to man on matters not so ordinarily evident to him, but they nevertheless convey useful information. This is a feature which it shares in common with the Vedas as will be seen in No. 12 and in the next one.

९ए. श्रुतिश्च नोऽतीन्द्रियार्थविषये विज्ञानोत्पत्तौ निमित्तम् ।

Thai II-6.

Srutis (Vedas) are the means to furnish us with knowledge of spheres of existence beyond our senses.

९बी. श्रुतिश्च नः प्रमाणं अतीन्द्रियविषयविज्ञानोत्पत्तौ ।

S. B. 2-3-1.

The Vedas constitute our source of knowledge about truths beyond our sense-perception and mind.

Note-9 (a) and (b):

These explain why we have to go beyond our physical sciences. The world or universe is not exhausted by what is perceived by our senses and by our reason based on perceptions. The recent researches into the atomic structure have disclosed an aspect of the world undreamt of by man. Similarly the mind of man is not exhausted by his consciousness. There are spheres in man beyond his consciousness. The Sub-conscious is one such region, but there is a more important region beyond consciousness which

has been experienced by very pure and high souls, the Rishis; and the Vedas are a record of these experiences.

Atomic science relates to spheres beyond the senses in the external world. Religion relates to spheres beyond consciousness in the constitution of the internal world of man himself.

१०. यथाप्राप्तमेव कारकास्तित्वं उपादाय कर्माणि विदधत् शास्त्रं
न कारकास्तित्वे व्याप्रियते ।

Tai 1-11.

Being compelled to recognise the existence of the various factors of action, the Scriptures prescribe various Karmas (rituals). It does not (here) deal with the reality of these factors.

Note:

Sankara's firm opinion is that Karmas do not lead to Truth. Yet they are found in the Vedas. So, are not rituals and everything connected with them equally valid as truth? Sankara contends that the Vedas do not declare them as leading to Truth. Man feels impelled to act, believing in the reality of multiplicity. The Vedas only prescribe means to satisfy this impulse. It does not deal with the reality or otherwise of the factors of Karma in Karma Kanda.

११. शास्त्रहेतुत्वात् धर्माधर्मविज्ञानस्य ।

S. B. 3-1-15.

The Vedas are our authority for our knowledge of right Karmas and wrong Karmas.

Note:

Mimamsakas hold that natural acts, like suckling a child or feeding it or nursing it when sick, however good they may be, cannot be called Dharma. There must be the element of अपूर्वता (something not seen before, say, not in common with animals) in Dharma. So what is declared by the Vedas alone (and not found in nature) is Dharma; and what is prohibited by the Vedas is Adharma. Smritis (manuals on rituals etc.) written by Rishis are also a secondary source of Dharma. This definition has been widened by Vedantins as has been done by the Gita. Before the Gita, sacred acts were of a category different from secular acts; this difference was done away with in the Gita. Vedic Karmas, no less than natural acts, cause bondage. But both these, done without attachment to fruits, will serve to help man out of bondage.

Vedic Karmas serve to bring their own special results as stated in the Gita.

Jnana Kanda

Introduction to No. 12:

Here has to be pointed out a great contribution made by Sankara to the Mimamsa Sastra. He has given a definition of Pramana Vakya (authoritative sentence in a long text) which not only includes Jaimini's definition but goes far beyond it to cover portions which Jaimini has expressly excluded as merely declaratory. Jaimini's dictum is "the aim of the Vedas being the performance of Karma, passages not germane to Karma are of no use or importance".

As a result of this, the whole of the Upanishads was considered beneath notice by Jaimini.

Here is given Sankara's definition of Pramana Vakya.

१२. न वाक्यस्य वस्त्वन्वाख्यानं क्रियान्वाख्यानं वा प्रमाण्या-
प्रामाण्य कारणं, किं तर्हि? निश्चितफलवद्विज्ञानोत्पाद-
कत्वम्। तद्यत्रास्ति तत्प्रमाणं वाक्यं, यत्र नास्ति
तदप्रमाणम्।

Br. 1-4-7.

The test of the authority or otherwise of a passage is not whether it states a fact or an action but its capacity to generate certain and fruitful knowledge. A passage that has this is authoritative and one that lacks it is not.

Note:

Mimamsakas hold that only "imperative sentences" found in the Vedas are Pramana Vakyas. They are the commands of the Vedas to perform something or abstain from others. Mere declaratory sentences leave us cold. So they are of no value for our conduct.

According to them, Upanishads belong to this latter category and as such are worthy of no consideration.

But Sankara asks: Does not Atma Jnana, knowledge of the true nature of one's self, have the great result of destroying ignorance and misery? Are not these results more important than obtaining wealth or going to Heaven?

Do not the Upanishads emphasise the glories of Atman? Do they leave us in any doubt about it? And do not sentences in the Upanishads convey the purport of the glorious nature of Atman as the sentence in Brahmana portions of the Vedas conveys sense about the purport of the performance of Karmas?

So the test of authority of a sentence or otherwise is not its reference to Karma. But the test is, Do they convey clear and undoubted ideas? Do they convey that a result can be achieved by its knowledge? Then they are to be accepted whether they relate to Karma or are mere statements of reality.

This dictum of Sankara comprehends Karma also in its wide bosom, while it brings in the Upanishads as a serious matter for discussion and understanding. Sankara, as usual, is all-inclusive and not destructive. He comes to fulfil and not to destroy.

Because of the limited definition of Pramana Vak- yas, the Upanishads were necessarily excluded from consideration and interpretation by the Mimamsakas. So it was left to the Vedantins to interpret the portion thus excluded. Hence, the Uttara Mimamsa had to come into existence.

Sankara in the definition given here has improved on that of the Mimamsakas as it includes also the subject-matter of Karma Kanda. For Sankara both Karma Kanda and Jnana Kanda have a definite place in the evolution of man, each serving a purpose of its own.

१३ए. वस्तुप्रतिपादनं तत्परत्वं सिद्धं शास्त्राणाम् ।

Br. 1-3-1.

It is established that the Vedas delineate the nature of reality and they have it as their ultimate aim.

१३बी. शास्त्रादिदमेव भवति, इदं इष्टसाधनं, इदं अनिष्टसाधनं इति साध्यसाधनसंबन्धविशेषाभिव्यक्तिः ।

Br. 2-1-20.

The Scriptures only do this much; they point out or reveal what leads to good and what leads to evil, thereby indicating the particular relationships that subsist between the various ends and their appropriate means.

Note:

Here Sankara gives the new viewpoint to the commands of Karma Kanda. The various Vedic commands too are brought into line with the dictum that the Vedas are mere statements revealing truth. These commands, in fact, reveal the means to obtain various ends.

१४. न अवश्यं तस्य (आगमबलावलम्बिनः) यथादृष्टमेव सर्वं अभ्युपगन्तव्यम् ।

S. B. II-2-38.

It is not necessary for one whose strength is reliance on Scriptures that he should accept all things perceived by the senses as real.

Note:

Vedic truths or dicta have, as their source, the superconscious experience of Rishis. These truths

relate to a sphere of existence beyond sense-experience and reason. Ordinary experience tells us that all men and things are entirely separate from one another: the Vedas say सर्व खल्विदं ब्रह्म (all different things are in truth Brahman.) This is so astounding a statement that man finds it difficult to believe and accept it as it flatly contradicts his experience.

But what has to be remembered here is that the Vedic dictum does not speak of ordinary sense-experience. An adherent of the Vedas need not and should not be shocked at such a statement contradicting the senses.

According to Sankara there are not many such dicta in the Vedas. The one quoted above is the most important, a variation of it is जीवो ब्रह्मैवनापरः (Jiva indeed is Brahman and not different from it). The Christians, why, even the Dvaitis among the Hindus, consider the statement as blasphemous.

There can be unity of all inspite of and even in the face of staring multiplicity. Are not the leaves, twigs and branches of a tree, one with the tree? Certainly leaves are different from each other. Leaves are different from twigs and branches; yet, inspite of these differences, they all come in, in the correct conception of the tree. Inspite of the multiplicity, the tree includes them all. So too, Brahman includes all.

It must be sadly confessed here that, inspite of a great touch-stone furnished by Sankara for testing the worth of Sastras, many customs repugnant to our ethical sense are being upheld as part of the

Sastras on the strength of No. 14. It is an abuse of this saying to say that certain religious texts give sanction for practices like untouchability, exclusion of certain castes and people from temples in India (as of Negroes from schools in America), prohibition of marriage outside caste and many morally repulsive rituals like goat-sacrifice at Kali temples—these all have the sanction of religious texts. The customs are upheld on the ground that these religious texts have their sanction from spheres beyond senses and have to be accepted and followed even though they may seem repugnant.

This is a most flagrant abuse of religious texts. Even some vital propositions of the sages Kapila and Patanjali were rejected by the all-inclusive Sankara in those parts of their teachings where they impinged on the Great Truth of the Unity of all.

The sage Kapila has systematised Hindu metaphysical thought, specially the higher psychology in his Sankhya Darsana. The sage Patanjali is the author of the Yoga Darsana, the most authoritative treatise on what may be termed as applied psychology of the Hindus. These Darsanas are two out of the six famous Hindu Darsanas. Both the systems accept the plurality of souls, in spite of their acceptance of the soul's capacity for infinite perfection. Sankara's remark about sage Kapila (S.B. 2-1-1) in spite of the great deference paid to him, is “कपिलो हि न सर्वास्तित्वदर्शनं अनुमन्यते अतः कपिलतन्त्रं वेदविरुद्धम्”

“Kapila does not deduce or allow for the great truth that the one Atman pervades all. So the treatise of Kapila is contrary to the Vedas”. So Sankara, even

though all-inclusive, unhesitatingly rejects the conclusion of sage Kapila, about the plurality of soul, while accepting the great technique evolved by the sage in his treatise. Similarly, while accepting practically the whole of the Yoga Sutra as a guide for religious practice, Sankara rejects Patanjali's proposition of plurality of souls एतेन योगः प्रत्युक्तः (S.B. II-1-3) (So Yoga is refuted).

Here is a great lesson for the modern world. The one great Truth of the Upanishads, the supreme unity of All (see No. 264) should be the Mantra of the whole world. The basis of all ethics is this great truth. All our faith and action should be on this basis. This is the touch-stone on which the truth or otherwise of religious practices mentioned in the Sastras has to be tested. Similarly, very many of the beliefs and practices found in so-called religious texts have to be discarded in so far as they militate against "unity of all" and ethics. The rest of the teachings alone in the text books may be accepted and followed. The abuse of the saying given above should not be allowed but guarded against.

१५. ज्ञापकं हि शास्त्रं न तु कारकं इति स्थितिः ।

Br. 1-4.10.

Indeed it is an accepted principle that Scriptures are only informatory (revealing truths) and not mandatory (issuing commands).

Note :

(a) Scriptures like other sciences reveal to us truths which we did not know. This is what is meant

by 'informative' or 'revelatory'. They do not create a truth nor do they compel us to do something or prohibit us from doing some other thing. (b) There are Acharyas who have attempted the interpretation of the Vedic texts. The first is Jaimini. The sheet-anchor of his school of thought is that the Vedas teach us about rituals, a knowledge of which is not gained by us instinctively or from our sense experience or reasoning. The vital sentences of the Vedas are the commands found in the Brahmana portion of the Vedas or the various Vidhi Vakyas, injunctions to do rituals. The other simple declaratory sentences in the Vedas are known as Artha Vadas or Vidhi Seshas (supplements to commands). These often take the form of panegyrics. These latter are useful as throwing further light on the Vidhi Vakya as to the materials to be used in the yajnas, the deities to be propitiated, the nature of the offering, etc. etc. Because of this view, Jaimini's interpretation of the Vedas excludes the Upanishads. In his view, the Upanishads are Artha Vadas relating to Atman (S. B. 3-4-2). Unless Atman is there to enjoy the fruits of sacrifices after death in heaven, people may not take to sacrifices at all. No more value need be attached to the Upanishads. The Upanishads are thus brushed aside by Jaimini. (c) Sankara accepts the principle of the division of sentences into two classes: (1) Vidhi Vakyas (vital sentences) and (2) Artha Vadas (Vakya Sesha or supplementary sentences). But he extends the scope of the vital sentences here—see No. 15. Statements of truths regarding the superconscious state, which contribute to bring great blessings to man, are also vital sentences. These too, like the statements relating to rituals, are not known to us by instinct or from

the sense-knowledge or reason. But a knowledge of these has an important bearing and influence on our life. So these statements (not commands) are valid Vedic sentences—see No. 12. (d) Sankara goes a step further—see No. 13 (b)—and affirms that the imperative sentences (Vidhis) can also be viewed as mere statements of the means to gain certain ends, say, to go to heaven after death or to obtain other blessings like wealth or children. (e) This dictum of Sankara along with some others makes the Vedas one of the sciences. Science also reveals truths unknown to us before, but they relate to the physical world. Similarly, Sankara makes the Vedas the science that reveals to us the supersensuous truths (see No. 9). (f) Not creative—the Vedas do not create a truth. In them truths are recorded.

१६. प्रमाणभूतायाः श्रुतेः पुरुषस्य इव व्याजानुपपत्तेः ।

Br. 4-4-7.

Sruti being a trustworthy authority cannot have recourse to subterfuge like a man.

Note:

Man is swayed by his passions; his statements are thereby vitiated and stray from truth. But Vedic records are not born in an atmosphere of passions and are therefore trustworthy.

१७. वेदस्य हि निरपेक्षं स्वार्थे प्रामाण्यं, रवेरिव रूपविषये ।

S.B. 2-1-1.

Indeed, in its own sphere, the Vedas have independent authority and need no other support just as the Sun (requires no other aid) in the sphere of forms.

Note:

As the sun reveals forms and nothing else is required to reveal forms, so the Vedas without any other help reveal supersensuous truths. According to Sankara, the Upanishads contain only one truth "Atman is Brahman". Neither senses nor reason can serve to bring this truth to man. Sruti is quite independent of reason and that alone has to be accepted as our authority for the grand declaration—see No. 4.

१८. पुरुषार्थोपदेशत्वात् श्रुतीनाम् ।

Tai. 1-11.

Srutis reveal the means to attain various ends of man.

Note:

Man feels the want for many other things than God-realisation or self-realisation. Karma Kanda supplies these other needs of man. Man may resort to them if he has sufficient faith in them or thinks them worth having—see No. 13(b).

Limitations of Sabda Pramana (Veda)

१९. न पारमार्थिकं वस्तु कर्तुं निवर्तयितुं वा अर्हति ब्रह्मविद्या ।

Self-realisation (through the practice of Brahma Vidya) does not create the Supreme Reality nor does it alter it.

Note:

Brahma Vidya, realisation that Atman is Brahman, is the most valuable asset of man. But by realisation

Brahmanhood of Atman is not created nor Atman's nature altered. Weaving creates cloth, Polishing makes a brass plate shine and thus alters the dull appearance of the plate. On the other hand, realisation, i.e. Brahma Vidya does not create something new or in any way alter the nature of the Atman.

२०. न हि प्रत्यक्षविरोधे श्रुतेः प्रामाण्यं । न हि श्रुतिशतमपि
शीतोग्निः अप्रकाशः इति ब्रुवत् प्रामाण्यं उपैति ।

G. 18-66.

Certainly Sruti (Veda) cannot be an authority as against observed facts. Even if hundreds of Vedic texts declare that fire is cold and devoid of light, they cannot become an authority on this point.

Note:

Here Sankara shows the limitation of the Vedas or Sastras. They are not meant to cross their boundary of the super-conscious and come down and offer remarks about the sense world and on results of reason.

२१. श्रुतेः ज्ञापकत्वात्, न शास्त्रं पदार्थान् अन्यथाकर्तुं प्रवृत्तं किं
तर्हि यथाभूतानां अज्ञातानां ज्ञापने ।

Br. II-20.

Note:

Sruti is merely informative; the Scriptures seek not to alter things but to supply information about things unknown, as they are.

Note:

The idea given in No. 18 is expressed in other words here.

२२. न च वचनं वस्तुनः सामर्थ्यजनकम् ।

Br. I-4-10.

Not can a Scriptural statement impart any power to a thing.

२३. न च वचनात् आरभ्योपि नित्य एव ।

Tai I-11.

Even a Vedic sentence cannot state that "one with a beginning is eternal."

२४. न तु शास्त्रं भृत्यानिव बलात् निवर्तयति नियोजयति वा ।

Br. II-1-20.

But the Scriptures neither hinder nor direct a person by force as if he were a slave.

Note:

This brings out the implications of No. 10 more explicitly.

२५. दृश्यन्ते हि पुरुषाः रागमदिगौरवात् शास्त्रं आतिक्रामन्तः

Br. II-1-20.

We see how people disobey even the Scriptures because of excess of attachment.

Note:

The idea of some schools on Karma Kanda is that Veda Vidhis are like the orders of an imperial lord whose commands cannot be disobeyed with impunity. Sankara holds that they are not like the commands of a lord.

२६. पुरुषाः स्वयमेव यथारुचि साधनविशेषेषु प्रवर्तन्ते । शास्त्रं तु सवितृप्रकाशवत् उदास्त एव ।

Br. II-1-20.

People of their own accord, guided by their own tastes, adopt particular means. The Scriptures remain simply neutral like sunlight for instance.

Note:

This again elaborates the idea in Nos. 15 and 24. This, however, brings out the meaning of Sankara more clearly. Vedic dicta are only optional. If the ends are desired by man, the appropriate Vedic Karma may be done. It is entirely left to man to choose any Karma, if it is of value to him.

How impersonal and eternal

Both the schools of Jaimini and Sankara hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end and ever-existent. Jaiminias hold there is no personality connected with the Vedas as their discoverer, but that they have been handed down from generation to generation and will be so continued.

But Sankara holds that the connection of the Vedas with mortal personalities like the Rishis does not mar the eternal nature of the Vedas. According to him the Vedas are the records of truths, seen and experienced by Rishis by transcending their senses and mind and by raising themselves to the superconscious plane. As records of truths of the superconscious, the Vedas are eternal. These truths existed even before the times of the Rishis and would continue to exist even after their death.

Thus Sankara's explanation is certainly more comprehensible, as his idea accords with those of modern scientific truths. Vedic truths, however, relate to higher levels. This is explained further in the notes coming in this section.

२७. अस्माकं अप्रत्यक्षमपि चिरंतनानां प्रत्यक्षम् ।

S. B. 1-3-3,

Even things not within the ken of our perception were matters of direct perception to our forefathers (Rishis.)

Note:

The Vedic truths, though not within our ken, were within the ken of Rishis of old. They discovered them as Einstein did the Law of Relativity.

२८. मन एव केवलं रूपज्ञाननिमित्तं योगिनाम् ।

Br. I-42.

In the case of Yogins the mind alone is the cause of perception of forms etc.

Note:

Without any other instrument than their own minds, highly purified, refined and made subtle by Yoga, without the aid of eyes, the Yogis can see. They saw truth similarly.

२९. न वस्तुयाथार्थ्यज्ञानंपुरुषबुद्ध्यपेक्षम् ।

S. B. I-1-2.

Perception of the true nature of reality is not a product of man's intellect.

Note:

The perception of the reality of a thing is an insight. It is not the activity of imagination as in the case of a poem by a gifted poet. The Law of Gravity existed even before Newton discovered it. The still more universal Law of Relativity existed before Einstein and will continue to operate. Their mind saw these in their reality. They are not the work of their imagination or ingenuity of mind as a poem or Radar is. Similar is the connection of Rishis with the Vedas. The truths existed even before they saw and recorded them and they will continue to exist. So they are eternal. They have nothing to do with the discoverer. They are impersonal. This view of the Vedas given by Sankara accords with our ideas of scientific truths.

३०. आकृतिमिदं च शब्दानां संबन्धो न व्यक्तिभिः, आकृतीनां
च नित्यत्वम् ।
S. B. I-3-28.

Words indicate not units or individuals but the genus. The genus is eternal (The Vedas relate general propositions and not particular events or things).

Note:

This further clarifies the idea of this section. The Vedas deal with laws and not with individual facts. Thus they are impersonal and eternal.

Understanding by the meaning of Vedas essential

The practice of only learning the Vedas by rote and not caring to know its meaning is almost

universally prevalent among the Vedic scholars. This practice is not approved of in No. 32. It is also the belief amongst these scholars that mere recitation of these Vedas without knowing their meaning is a highly meritorious act. It is supposed to have Adrishta Phala (unseen effect). This belief is not supported by Sankara (see Nos. 31, 33, 34). Belief by itself has wonderful influence on man. Belief, the incentive to action, produces results undoubtedly. Sankara holds that the Vedas have to be understood if they are to bring about results. If meaning was not necessary, why the Veda Bhashyas, and Jaimini and Vyasa sutras and the numerous commentaries on these works? Nos. 35 to 39 deal generally with the construction of sentences, inclusive of Vedic sentences. So they are a part of "Mimamsa". As the Jaimini Sutras came to be called Purva Mimamsa, Vyasa Sutras when they came to be framed were called Uttara Mimamsa (see notes to No. 12).

३१. अविपरीतार्थप्रतिपत्तेः श्रेयः प्राप्त्युपपत्तेः, लोकवत् ।

Br. I-3.1.

As in common life, (in Scriptural matters also) it is but proper that not an incorrect understanding leads to welfare.

३२. दृष्टार्थत्वात् अध्ययनं अर्थाविबोधपर्यन्तं इति स्थितिः ।

S. B. III-4-6.

Study by repetition has a seen purpose. It is an agreed canon that it ends only with a comprehension of the meaning.

३३. न शब्दमात्रं अर्थस्वरूपं संभवति शब्दार्थयोर्मेदात् ।

Br. I-4-10.

The mere word does not constitute the object in its reality. Word is different from denoted object.

३४. अविपरीतबोधात् श्रेयःप्राप्तेः विपर्यये च
अनिष्टप्राप्तिदर्शनात्

Br. I-3-8.

Correct comprehension of the Vedas leads to well-being and erroneous notions, as we find, lead to evil.

३५. न ह्यसत्यपि संभवे मुख्यस्यैवार्थस्य ग्रहणं इति कश्चित्
आज्ञापयिता विद्यते ।

S. B. IV-3-14

Indeed when literal meaning is inappropriate, no authority enjoins that literal meaning alone should be accepted.

३६. तत्र हि गौणी कल्पना शब्दस्य यत्र मुख्यार्थो न संभवति ।

Pra. VI 3.

Where literal meaning does not fit in, then alone the metaphorical meaning is to be adopted.

३७. अन्यनिन्दा अन्यस्तुतये ।

Br. I-4-6.

The criticism of one serves as a tribute to another.

३८. श्रुतहान्य श्रुतकल्पनायाः अन्याय्यत्वात् ।

Br. 1-4-10.

It is unreasonable to give up the plain meaning of words used in Sruti and put new meaning in their place.

३९. निश्चितं च ज्ञानं पुरुषार्थसाधनमिष्यते । अतोऽसंशितो
वाक्यार्थो वाच्यः परहितार्थिना ।

And sure knowledge leads to the supreme end of human life, viz., liberation. Hence one who wishes to do good to others should not use expressions of a doubtful import.

४०. क्रियायामिव वस्तुनि विकल्पस्य असंभवात् ।

There cannot be alterations in truth as in rituals or actions.

Note :

In rituals there may be two or more alternatives. Taking the observance of Ekadasi fast, for instance, (fast on the 11th day after Full moon or New moon), one sect observes it on the day when Ekadasi touches Dasami (tenth day), other sects observe it on the day Ekadasi touches Dwadasi (twelfth day). So far as rituals are concerned, both the alternatives are correct and approved. But in truth there cannot be any alternative. $7+3=10$ and ten alone. In the same way, ignorance can be removed only by truth, and not by anything else such as Karma.

४१. पुरुषामिप्रायतन्त्रौ अर्थानर्थौ ।

Good and evil are not absolute; but depend on each one's opinion.

Note :

For a Rock feller 100,000 dollars are nothing. But the same 100,000 dollars are a big fortune for a poor man.

४२. सुखावबोधार्थं आख्यायिका लोकवत्।

Ait. Intr.—II.

The stories (in the Scriptures) serve as a means of easily impressing (ideas in) others as in common life.

Note :

Stories are introduced in Scriptures not as historical fact but for better understanding of an abstruse point or subject.

४३. प्राक् प्रबोधात् संसारित्वाभिगमः।

S. B. IV-1-3.

Before the dawn of realisation we have to concede the reality of Samsara (the world of sense).

Note :

Till one realises, one will be subject to the influence of joy and sorrow.

४४. सर्वत्र प्रशस्तमेव बोद्धव्यं कर्तव्यञ्च न निष्प्रयोजनं बोद्धव्यम्।

G. IV-18.

It is only what is high and worthy of knowing is worthy of our effort. Not the worthless.

४५. निगडे हि निज्ञाति, निगडितस्य मोक्षाय यत्नः कर्तव्यो भवति।

Br. III-2 Intr.

Only when the existence of fetters is known, can there be an effort to free ourselves from the fetters.

CHAPTER II

KARMA (PRIMARY RITUALS)

INTRODUCTION

The popular idea of religion begins and ends with the performance of rituals and ceremonies. This is supported by the fact that more than 90 per cent of the Vedas deals with the various factors of the innumerable rituals. Man is by his very nature eager to ward off adversity and bring about prosperity. When he feels powerless by himself, he seeks the help of higher powers or God. Hence the origin of rituals (rites meant to appease and propitiate gods to win their favour). Often the exclusive attention to these so blinds its votaries that they forget the more important aspects of religion namely, service of fellow creatures and ethical conduct. Their importance should be properly recognised and they should play greater part in religion.

With most, the attachment to rituals is so strong, because they have been instructed from youth that these have issued from the commandments of God, any default of which will entail condign punishment.

Jaimini's prescription for Moksha

Acharya Jaimini is the father of the science of interpretations of texts (Mimamsa) and applies his science to the interpretation of the Vedas. His book on Vedic interpretations consists of over 2000 Sutras and is called Purva Mimamsa or simply Mimamsa.

The word "Mimamsa" means desire to measure and in Purva Mimamsa the Vedic sentences have been measured or interpreted. The Vedic Karmas have been divided into four categories: Nitya, Naimittika, Kamya and Pratishiddha.

Nitya Karmas have been ordained to be performed every day as long as life lasts, e. g. "Agnihotra is to be performed as long as life lasts". Agnihotra is the typical Nitya Karma. But the Vedas do not make mention of any Phala (fruit) for this. So it cannot have any fruit. Yet, as it is an imperative command of the Vedas, it cannot be given up. If it is given up, it becomes an offence against the mandate of the Vedas and will entail Pratyavaya (serious evil consequences). How can a servant disobey his master's order and go scot-free?

Thus the three essential features of Nitya Karma are: (1) it is to be compulsorily performed daily; (2) it does not confer any fruit as Kamya Karmas do; (3) its non-performance will entail Pratyavaya.

Sankara, as will be seen from this chapter, seeks to repudiate all these three features of Nitya Karma.

Naimittika Karmas are sacrifices to be performed on special occasions like the full moon, new moon, eclipses, etc.

Kamya Karmas are sacrifices to be performed to achieve special desires like the birth of a son, etc.

Pratishiddha Karmas (prohibited actions), the performance of which will produce evil, say, hell or birth as animals, etc.

Now we are furnished with a chart to attain the highest end of man, Parama Purushartha, according to Mimamsa. The chart precribes:—

1. Do not do Pratishiddha Karma in order to avoid Papa Janmas (evil births).
2. Do not perform Kamya Karma in order to avoid Punya Janmas (good births).
3. Do Nitya Karmas without fail in order that Pratyavaya (untoward evil results) may be avoided.

Thus having blocked the cause of birth in hell or heaven, as also the generation of any unthought of evil, the way has been paved for the attainment of Moksha in the most easy manner without any further effort. This is the scheme of Moksha according to the Mimamsakas. Here it will be found that performance of Nitya Karma prescribed by the Vedas is the corner-stone of this scheme.

This scheme is learnt by every student of Sanskrit because rudiments of Mimamsa are essential to understand any Hindu religious literature. So these ideas regarding Nitya Karma dominate the popular religious thought.

In spite of the mighty efforts of Jaimini through his work Purva Mimamsa Sutas and host of commentaries thereon, the Vedic rituals have practically died out. Even Agnihotra Yajna is now performed by very few Brahmins. A few survivals of Vedic rites are also found lingering in the household sacrifices.

But rituals as such cannot die out. They have revived in the form of worship in temples, bhajans, etc. The books called Tantras are the authority on temple-worship. As temple-worship has no sanction in the Vedas, one of the modern Hindu sects, the Arya Samajists, have taken up a very simple Yajna for their daily religious devotions.

Sankara and Veda

According to Sankara, the Vedas reveal the means to an end, which means may be adopted if found necessary, otherwise left out. This attitude of Sankara on Karma is most revolutionary and emphatic. Not even a sworn rationalist or a rabid Marxist could be more outright than Sankara in the condemnation of rituals as thoroughly useless for spiritual gain. Sankara considers them useless only for the supreme aim of man, viz. spiritual attainment. It would be but proper to add in this context that a Rationalist or a Marxist equates religion only with the performance of rituals in consonance with the ignorant popular idea. Further, their idea of the universe does not go beyond senses and reason. But Sankara's condemnation of rituals is for a quite different reason. Rituals yield fruits in the form of enjoyment and heaven; they are inadequate to uplift man spiritually. Man has a far more important and efficient instrument available than rituals.

But all has not been said about Sankara's attitude to Karma. Even though Sankara disparages Karma, he equally recognises the fact of its necessity, nay, its inevitability in the infancy of spiritual life. It is a psychological necessity which, according to him, has to be outgrown and will be ontgrown. Just as

Mahatma Gandhi states he does not disbelieve in idol worship, Sankara says that he does not dis-believe in Karma. For those whose ideas of religion do not rise beyond pleasing the Devas or a personal good for granting their desires, Karmas are inevitable. Children cry for toys and a loving father provides them with toys. Similarly, the Vedas have provided rituals for the spiritually-young minds.

It is, however, sad to notice that many do not outgrow rituals. Swami Vivekananda has remarked, "It is good to be born in a church but never to die in it." But many do die there. Further, Sankara often reminds us—what is often not recognised—that even though prescribed by the Vedas, Karmas lead to bondage and not to freedom.

The word Karma has more senses than one. It means "rituals and the like"; it means also "activity" in general. So the use of the word Karma has led to great confusion regarding an important teaching of Sankara. His scathing criticism of Karma as perfectly useless has often been misunderstood. He is taken to have advocated quietism or cessation of all activities in general. What he has condemned is Pravritti-Karma alone, activities leading the mind outwards away from Atman. Sankara is in no way an advocate of quietism or passivity; his life of most intense activity is itself a sufficient refutation to such a charge. Sankara advocates Nivritti Marga as vehemently as he condemns Pravritti Marga or rituals and the like. He, following the Sastras, calls on us for ceaseless Yatna or effort to conquer the mind and make it turn towards Atman or God. This is Nivritti Karma

and the first step to Jnana Nishta which is dealt with in Chapter IV.

Karma Yoga

Further, following the Sastras, Sankara declares that the fangs of Karma can be extracted and the snake made useful and beneficial. Karma can be turned into Karma Yoga. What was conceived as Pravritti can be made to reverse its direction and be converted into Nivritti Karma. Then Karma of all sorts, instead of causing bondage, results in Chitta Suddhi (purification of mind) which is the first step towards the highest spiritual attainment. An illustration will make the matter clear. A tank often proves a watery grave. But the water, the cause of death, can be conquered by getting into the tank and learning to swim in it. Swimming has to be learnt in the very water which proves to be a grave. Similarly the victory over Karma is to be won while doing Karma. The cause of bondage was not in Karma itself, but in its urge, Kama or desire. So the real enemy of man is not Karma but Kama. Karma originates from Kama and results in bondage. Give up the desire for fruit, do not be affected whether the fruit accrues or not; keep equanimity of mind in success or failure; be unattached; then the first round in the battle is won. That man is clever in action, says Gita, who acquires this equanimity in regard to failure or success in action—योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ।

Man performs rituals, not because he is enjoined to do them by the Sastra. Impelled by the desire to gain something good or to avoid something evil, but finding no means to come by his aim with the help

of the world, he resorts to higher powers. When home-remedies fail, the patient resorts to the doctor; when the world will not grant man's purpose, he resorts to gods or the God. The Vedas prescribe how to propitiate the God or gods to obtain various desires or ward off various evils. This kind of Karma is called Pravritti Karma. So the Vedas are no more mandatory than a doctor's prescription.

It is mere rituals of ignorant people that he condemns as useless for their spiritual growth, unless rectified in the meanwhile by Karma Yoga.

Some call the activities of Siddha Purushas, (realised souls) as Karma Yoga. According to Sankara the activities of such persons do not come within the purview of Sastras at all. Medicines are prescribed for the sick and not for the healthy. Sastra is meant for the unregenerate and not for the realised soul, for the Sadhaka and not the Siddha. So he expressly states in his introduction to Chapter II of the Gita that the activities of Sri Krishna and other such Mahatmas are not comprehended by him under the term Karma.

Sankara and Jaimini

Thus Sankara's views on Karma and the Vedas are fundamentally different from that of Acharya Jaimini, the expounder of Purva Mimamsa. Mimamsa means desire to measure. So Mimamsa expounds rules to interpret Vedic sentences or texts. Jaimini's dictum is that Karmas, rituals, alone constitute the subject-matter of the Vedas. The Upanishads, which do not deal with rituals, are no authoritative portions of the Vedas at all, but "Arthavadas", the panegyrics relating to Atman.

Sankara's contention is that Karma, if at all, has a minor place in religion. No harm can result to a pure man if he entirely ignores it. It is all the more glory to that man if he gives it up. But the Upanishads, par excellence, constitute the Vedas, as these alone instruct and urge man to self-realisation. Man has to hear and understand Upanishads, ruminate over its meaning till full conviction is born and occupy himself with nothing else in the mine.

Pravritti Karma—its urge

In Sastras, Karmas are divided into two groups according to the effect they produce on man. Man is drawn by the senses to outward activities. These cause bondage to man and these are known as Pravritti Karma. There are other activities or efforts for restraining the senses and mind and turn them towards the self. These constitute Nivritti Karma which effects purity of mind and selflessness and thus serves to break the bondage of Samsara.

Again Avidya (ignorance) is not ignorance of the world or of sciences or history. It is lack of knowledge of the Atman. Karma Kanda of the Vedas, as already stated, has been interpreted by Acharya Jaimini, in over 2200 Sutras, and later on commentaries have been written on these Sutras. This branch of the Vedas is called Mimamsa or Purva Mimamsa. Mimamsa means, measuring or interpretation of sentences.

४६. अविद्वद्विषयं कर्म ।

Gita-XVIII-66.

Karma (action) pertains to the ignorant.

Note:

Only people who have not grasped the nature of Atman, its purity as well as its native freedom, resort to performance of rituals and other activities. The source of bliss is Atman inside, but they seek for it outside.

४७ए. क्रियाहि नाम सा यत्र वस्तुस्वरूपनिरपेक्षैव चोद्यते पुरुष-
चित्तव्यापाराधीना च । यथा “ यस्यै देवतायै हविर्गृहीतं
स्यात् तां मनसा ध्यायेत् वषट्करिष्यन् । संध्यां मनसा
ध्यायेत् इति । चोदनातन्त्रा च ।

S. B. 1-1-4.

This gives a definition of Karma.

Karma or Kriya is that in which a (Vedic) injunction operates without any regard to the form or nature of the thing and is dependent on the mental activity or imagination of the person (performing). For instance, “mentally conceive of the Devata to whom the offering is meant, saying ‘vashad’ as the offering is made”. Or “imagine Sandhya as you meditate (on it)”. Kriya is dependent (is born of) on Vedic injunction.

Note:

Karma is created by a Vedic injunction and, but for it, such a Karma will not be thought of by man. Eating, sleeping, walking are natural acts—पुर्व क्रिया. Any Yajna is an अपूर्व क्रिया, not a natural act, but an artificial one created by the Vedas. The question whether there is a Devata and what is its form in reality is not of importance in Karma. Only the Devata to be propitiated is to be conceived or imagined by the priest. Mimamsakas say the form of the Devata is the very sound of the name concerned. If a Devata

has form it will die, as all endowed with forms have destruction. But the Vedas are eternal. So Devata has no form. The priest may imagine it while he offers the oblation to it. Such is the conception of the Mimamsakas.

They deal directly with the interpretation of Karma Kanda and according to them Jnana Kanda of the Vedas needs no interpretation. The school dealing with Karma Kanda are known as Mimamsakas. The other school which saw the necessity to interpret Jnana Kanda are known as Vedantins. Of the six Darsanas, these are the two important ones as they deal directly with the Vedas, while the other four make but an indirect reference to them.

४७बी. विधिप्रतिषेधाश्च अत्र (कर्मणि) अर्थवन्तः स्युः,
विकल्पो तसर्गापवादाश्च ।

Here (in Karma) injunctions (to do) and prohibitions (not to do the same) are (equally) valid, so also options, general rules and exceptions.

Note :

There are different schools of practice in regard to the Vedic rituals. Sankara himself gives examples to illustrate this statement about Karma by making reference to these schools.

In the performance of the ritual called Atiratra, one school says "A sixteenth cup shall not be used". Another school states "A sixteenth cup also shall be used". According to Mimamsakas, both practices are correct and effective. In another ritual quoted by Sankara the command is "the offering of the oblation

shall take place 'before sunrise". But another school prohibits "the offering before sunrise". Yet, both are considered effective.

Taking a current practice, Ekadasi fast is observed on two different days. One school says that the fast shall fall on the day having connection with the tenth day of the moon. Another school holds that fast shall not be on the day having connection with the tenth.

But Truth does not allow of option as in Karma. 7 plus 3 is ten and not 9 or 11. See saying 40.

४८. कर्मनिमित्तं न शास्त्रकृतं सर्वप्राणिषु दर्शनात् ।

Chap. II-23.

The impulse for action does not come from Scriptures because it (action) is seen in all creatures.

Note:

Rituals and activities are undertaken to ward off evil and attain good. Even a cow will run towards a man who shows it grass. It will run away from a man who runs towards it with a big stick in hand bawling out threats. These two activities are not due to the Sastras but to the nature of the cow and its instinct. Similarly, even man's resorting to action to attain good and ward off evil is natural to him by his instinct.

This desire is not created by command of the Sastras as some Mimamsakas contend. So, people following the Mimamsakas state they resort to rituals because the Vedas enjoin them. No, says Sankara. Man resorts to

Karma attracted by its good results, as the cow resorts to grass. He resorts to it not because of Vedas' call to him but because of the urge of his desire.

Sankara's implication is that non-performance of a Sastra Karma will not entail evil consequences; no command has been disobeyed here as there was no command. Sankara considers his viewpoint as very vital for the understanding of the Vedas (see No. 15—*Note* and 96).

४९. प्रागात्मज्ञानात् प्रवृत्त्युपपत्तेः ।

Br. IV-5-15.

Prior to the awakening of self-knowledge, the performance of rites or actions is proper or natural.

५०. तस्मात्स्वाभाविक्यैव अविद्यया युक्ताय रागादिदोषवते
यथाभिमतपुरुषार्थसाधनं कर्म उपदिशत्यग्रे ।

Br. V-1-1.

Therefore to those that are possessed of natural ignorance and defects such as attachment and aversion, Scriptures first advise the performance of rites calculated to achieve the desired personal ends.

५१. आत्माविशेषानभिज्ञः कर्मफलसंजाततृष्णः श्रद्धघानतया च
प्रवर्तते इति सर्वेषां नः प्रत्यक्षम् ।

G. XIII-2.

It is the direct experience of us all, that people, ignorant of the qualities of the self and prompted by greed for the fruits of action, are performing action with great zest.

५२. कर्त्रादिकारकक्रियाफलभेदप्रत्ययवत्त्वं हि निमित्तं उपादाय कर्म-
विधयः प्रवृत्ताः तिष्ठिमित्तं च न शास्त्रकृतं, सर्वप्राणिष-
दर्शनात् ।

Ch. II-23.

Based on differences of ideas such as the actor, factors of action, action itself, its results etc., the Vedic injunctions on rites operate; this cause of action is not a creation of Sastra because these are seen in all creatures.

५३. अविद्याकृतं कर्तृत्वमुपादाय विधिशास्त्रं प्रवर्तिष्यते ।

S.B. II-2-40.

Having recourse to the idea of actorship, the creation of ignorance, the injunctive portions of the Vedas operate.

Note:

These bring out the full implications of 48.

५४. देहाद्यात्मबुद्धिः अविद्वान् रागद्वेषादिप्रयुक्तो
धर्माधर्मानुष्ठानकृत् ।

G. XIII-2.

The ignorant man regards his physical body etc. as his self and, impelled by attachment, hatred and the like, performs righteous and unrighteous deeds.

Note:

This gives the definition of the "ignorant" according to Vedanta. That ignorant people resort to Karma is the view of Vedanta.

५५. कामयमानश्च करोति कर्माणि ।

Tai. I-11.

One with desires proceeds to action.

५६. कामप्रयुक्तत्वात् गार्हस्थ्य ।

Ait. Intro.

Householdership is due to the promptings of desire.

५७. आचारोपि च धर्मविशेष एव ।

S.B. III-1-11.

Acharya also is a species of Dharma (customary act.)

Its Nature

५८. न च धर्माधर्मयोः स्वरूपफलसाधनादिसमधिगमे, शास्त्राति-
रिक्तं कारणं शक्यं संभावयितुम् ।

S.B. III-1-8.

For knowing the right form, fruit and the means etc. of Dharma and Adharma (meritorious and non-meritorious rites), we cannot conceive of any other source than the Scriptures.

Note :

Sankara here fixes the place and school of the Karma Kanda. While Jaimini brushes aside Upanishad as Arthavadas and feels no necessity to comment on them, Sankara gives its due place to Karma in the scheme of human spiritual evolution. If Vedic rituals have now gone, temple rituals, bhajanas, etc., have come instead. Rituals are necessary in the early stage of "ignorance".

५९. कर्मनिमित्तं न शास्त्रकृतं सर्वप्राणिषु दर्शनात् ।

Ccha. II-23.

The prompting for action does not come from the Scriptures because (action) is seen in all creatures.

६०. कार्यकरणैः मूर्तैः संश्लेषो मूर्तस्य । स तु क्रियाहेतु-
र्दृष्टः नह्यमूर्तः कश्चित् क्रियावान् दृश्यते ।

Br. 4-3-15.

We see that an action is caused by the contact of the body and the organs which have form, with something else that has form. We never see a formless thing active.

Note:

Man attached highly to body will resort to Karma. For, a man who has identified himself with his body finds it difficult to conceive of a thing without form i.e. body. अव्यक्ताहि गतिर्दुःखम् देहवद्विरवाप्यते

Gr. 12-5).

६१. न विधिप्रतिषेधशास्त्रं फलहेतुभ्यां आत्मनोऽन्यत्वदर्शिनो
भवति ।

G. 13-2.

The injunctions and prohibitions of the Sastras do not apply to him who knows the self as distinct from cause and effect (self is the all to him).

Note:

Ideas of doing Karma do not occur to the man of “knowledge” as opposed to the “ignorant”.

६२. विधिप्रतिषेधशास्त्रं अविद्वद्विषयं इति सिद्धम् ।

G. 3-Intro.

The conclusion is that the Sastra of injunctions and prohibitions operates on the ignorant.

६३. अविद्याकामबीजं हि सर्वमेव कर्म ।

G. 18-66.

Indeed Avidya and Kama (Ignorance of self and desire) are the seeds of action.

६४. शारीरकं वाचिकं मानसं च कर्म श्रुतिस्मृतिसिद्धम् ।

S. B. 1-1-4.

Actions, whether to be performed by the body, speech or mind have their sources in Sruti (Veda) or Smritis (codes of conduct).

Note:

The source of all rituals, physical, material or mental is Sastra—the Karma Kanda (see notes to 11 and 58). The implication is that the natural activities of man do not come within the purview of Sastra.

Its Limitations

६५. न हि कर्मकाण्डेन पर आत्मा प्रकाशयते ।

Br. 4-4-22.

The ceremonial portion (of the Vedas) does not reveal anything about the supreme self.

Note:

This is the vital defect of the Karma Kanda. It does not pretend to deal with Atman. Chemistry is not intended to deal with subject-matter of physics. It is a warning not to seek for spiritual truths in Karma

Kanda. It does not prescribe means to attain Brahman. Its face is turned to Bhoga or enjoyment.

६६. कृतस्य क्षयित्वात् ।

Br. 1-4-15.

Anything created is destructible.

६७. विधिशास्त्रं तावत् यथाप्राप्तं कर्तृत्वं उपादाय कर्तव्यविशेषं उपदिशति न कर्तृत्वं आत्मनः प्रतिपादयति ।

S. B. 2-2-40.

Availing itself of the idea of actorship as it obtains, the portion of the Vedas advises various kinds of Action. But it does not propagate that the Self is an actor.

Note :

“There must be an actor before there is action or Karma. Therefore the man, i.e. his soul, has actorship. As the Vedas sanction Karma, it also conceals the actorship of the soul.” Such an argument about the actorship of the soul cannot be logically built up on the mere ground that the Vedas sanction Karmas. That actorship is born of “ignorance” is a proposition of Vedanta—see 69.

६८. न कर्मणोऽस्ति निःश्रेयसः साधनत्वम् ।

G. 18-66.

Works (rites) are not the means to the highest Bliss (Realisation).

Note :

That the unfailing performance of Vedic Nitya Karmas (certain rituals to be done daily) confers Moksha

is the Siddhanta (firmly established conclusion) of Mimamsakas. Here is an emphatic refutation of that Mimamsa proposition.

६९. सात्त्विकस्यापि कर्मणो अनात्मवित् साहंकारः कर्ता ।

G. 13-24.

The doer of even a sattvic action is ignorant of the self and egoistic.

Note :

A knowledge of the three Gunas, three kinds of the most subtle forces that enter into the composition of the mind, is assumed here. They are Tamas, Rajas and Sattva. Tamas shows itself in delusion and indolence, Rajas in activity and passion, Sattva in desire for knowledge and Vairagya (dispassion). Sattva is the highest of the Gunas. There is an element of "ignorance" even in Sattvic acts. (Gunas have to be transcended for Moksha.)

७०. प्रागात्मविज्ञानात् प्रवर्तमानं शास्त्रं अविद्यावद्विषयत्वं

नातिवर्तते ।

S. B. Intr.

The Sastra that is operative before the dawn of knowledge of the self does not transcend the sphere of Avidya or ignorance.

Note:

Reference here is to Karma Kanda of the Vedas.

७१. नापि ज्ञानस्य कर्मसाहाय्यापेक्षा, अविद्यानिवर्तकत्वेन

विरोधात् ।

G. 18-66.

Nor can knowledge require the aid of works, for as removing Avidya, knowledge is opposed to works.

Note: Here is one of the fundamental propositions of

Sankara and other Advaitins (Monists). "There is one and only one entity in the universe," is the doctrine of the Monists. Multiplicity is only a delusive appearance. They state that soul in its native purity alone exists and is God, and that the world is an imperfect reading of God through the senses. Different from them are the Dvaitins (Dualists). They state that soul, God and world are different and are all equally eternal, uncreated entities. Dvaitins have a soft corner for Nitya Karmas (see note 68) along with knowledge. Here Sankara (also see 211 and 213) contends that Pravritti Karma is of no help to attain realisation. Karma does not remove "ignorance".

७२. न हि तमस्तमसो निवर्तकम् ।

G. 18-66.

Indeed darkness cannot remove darkness.

Note:

This furnishes the reason for 71.

७३. न मोक्षार्थानि कर्माणि इति सिद्धम् ।

Br. III-Intr.

The conclusion is that works do not lead to liberation.

Note:

This gives the conclusion to be arrived at from 71 and 72.

७४. कर्तव्येन साध्यश्चेत् मोक्षः अभ्युपगम्यते अनित्य एव स्यात्।
S. B. 1-1-4.

If it should be conceded that it is possible to achieve Moksha by doing something, then it will be non-eternal.

Note :

Read with 66, if Karma enters the path of Moksha, the conclusion is inevitable that Moksha has an end, and gets destroyed or exhausted like the fruits of good Karma.

Its Fruits

७५. शास्त्रविहितविषयः कर्ममार्गः बन्धहेतुः ।

G. 18-30.

Karma Marga (the path of action) as taught in the Sastras is (also) the cause of bondage.

Note :

Simply because a Karma is prescribed by such a great authority as the Vedas, it does not follow that it has not the evil effect of bondage. It does constitute a block on the way to Moksha. Even good Karmas, done mechanically as prescribed by the Vedas (and without detachment as to the fruits) cause bondage. The positive attitude of detachment is essential for purity. If that is not present, bondage is the result. This is a point to be kept in mind by the Sadhakas regarding the Vedic Karmas. Sankara implies that "Nitya Karma" too produces bondage.

७६. धर्माधर्मयोः फले प्रत्यक्षे सुखदुःखे विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगजन्ये
ब्रह्मादिषु स्थावरान्तरेषु प्रसिद्धे ।

S. B. 1-1-4

The fruit of meritorious and non-meritorious acts are the palpable pleasure and pain produced by the contact of the senses with the sense-objects and which are well known to all beings from Brahma down to the very ant.

Note :

Here the fruit of the highest Karma and lowest Karma and its nature is given. The highest of the approved Karma confers Brahmahood, the lowest of the disapproved Karma converts one into an immovable thing like a plant. The joys and miseries which are the results of these Karmas respectively are but joys and sorrows produced by contact of the senses with the sense objects and no more. These joys are not of the supersensuous at all, as in the case of bliss of realisation. Far different is the fruit of Jnana from that of Karma.

७७. नान्यत् स्वर्गपश्वादिफलसाधनेभ्यः कमभ्योऽस्ति ।

G. II-42.

Works are a means of attaining Swarga, cattle and such other objects of desire, and nothing else.

Note :

Other fruits of Karma are mentioned here.

७८. कामाः सर्वे श्रौतस्मार्तकर्मणां फलानि ।

G. II-12.

The fruits of actions enjoined in the Sruti (Veda) and Smritis (codes of action) are but objects of desire.

७९. इहामुत्रफलभोगार्थानि कामहेतूनि कर्माणि ।

G. 2-16.

Action is caused by desire and has for its aim enjoyments of the objects or desire of this world or the next.

८०. अविद्यानिमित्तो हि प्रयोजनस्य भावो न वस्तुधर्मः ।

Ai. Intr.

Indeed the utility (of a thing) is due to (our) Avidya. It is not the property of the thing in itself.

Note :

The idea that fruits are derived from outside is born of "ignorance".

८१. पुरुषामिप्रायतन्त्रौ अर्थानर्थौ ।

Br. IV-5-15.

Good and evil depend on one's sense of values.

Note :

The value of these fruits is dependent on the opinion of men. Heat gives joy to men of Arctic regions, but heat is intolerable to a man near the Equator.

८२. फलार्थित्वात् सर्वारंभस्य ।

Br. I-4-17.

Since all undertakings are for the sake of results.

Note :

The motive of all actions is the desire for the fruit they will confer. Sankara's confirmed opinion is that Nitya Karma too has fruits just like other categories of Karma. Mimamsakas hold that Nitya Karmas have no fruits.

Its opposition to Jnana

८३. बाह्यप्रत्यगात्मप्रवृत्योः विरोधात् ।

Br. I-6-1.

For the two tendencies—one going outwards and the other devoting itself to the inner self—are contrariwise.

Note :

They go in opposite directions. In the first the mind is drawn to sense-objects outside. In the other mind is drawn inwards towards the self. The movements of the mind in the two are in opposite directions. Karma draws mind outwards. Jnana inwards. This is the vital psychological distinction between Karma and Jnana. These, in fact, are the characteristics of Pravritti and Nivritti.

८४. कर्मबीजो अविद्याक्षेत्रो ह्यसौ संसारवृक्षः समूलमुद्धर्तव्यः
तदुद्धारणे हि पुरुषार्थपरिसमाप्तिः ।

Br. 1-4-7.

The tree of relatives (or worldly) existence, has our actions for the seed and ignorance as its field; this tree has to be pulled down root and branch. For in the uprooting of it lies the perfection of human achievement.

८५. यदेव प्रवृत्तिकारणं तदेव निवृत्तिकारणं न भवति ।

Br. III-2-Intr.

What causes the starting of bondage cannot lead to its cessation.

Note:

These run in opposite direction as shown in 83 note.

८६. अविद्या सर्वात्मानं सन्तं असर्वात्मत्वेन ग्राहयति, सा च अविद्या न आत्मनः स्वाभाविको धर्मः ।

Br. IV-3-20.

What is infinite is represented as finite by Avidya. But this ignorance is not a natural character of the Self.

Note:

This gives a better idea of "ignorance". The Self, which comprehends all, feels that it is limited by the body and to the body. But this feeling is not an integral nature of the Self. Hence one can dispel it by Vidya "knowledge" and realise identity with all.

८७. न मोक्षार्थानि कर्माणि इति सिद्धम् ।

Br. III Intr.

Therefore it is proved that work does not lead to Liberation.

८८. कामप्रवृत्तेः ज्ञानप्रसिद्धता सर्वशास्त्रेषु प्रसिद्धा ।

Br. 4-5-15.

All the Scriptures tell us that the impulsion of desire is antagonistic to the realisation (of the Self).

Note:

See note to 83.

So Karma to be given up

८९. न, विधिप्रतिषेधशास्त्रं, फलहेतुभ्यां आत्मनोऽन्यत्वदर्शिनो भवति ।

G. 13-2-8.

The injunctions and prohibitions of Sastra do not apply to him who knows the self as distinct from cause and effect.

Note :

Karma Kanda is not useful to those who are convinced that their goal is the realisation of the Self.

९०. शास्त्रविहितविषयः कर्ममार्गः बंधहेतुः ।

G. 18-30.

The path of action as taught in the Sastra, the Karma Marga, is the cause of bondage.

Note :

This is the same as 75. See note to 75.

९१. विविदिषोः अपि सिद्धं पारिव्राज्यम् । Br. IV-5-15.

The conclusion is that the man who but seeks illumination can also renounce.

Note :

This supplements the idea of 89.

९२. लौकिको वैदिकश्च व्यवहारः उत्पन्नविवेकज्ञानस्य अविद्या-कार्यत्वात् अविद्यानिवृत्तौ निवर्तते ।

The worldly activities and religious rites being the product of Avidya cease for a man on the dawn of knowledge (consequent on) cessation of Avidya.

Note :

This explains 89. Why the Jnani drops Karma is stated here.

९३. मोक्षस्य अकार्यत्वात् मुमुक्षोः कर्मानर्थक्यम् ।

G. IV. Intr.

Moksha (Liberation) being no effect of any act, no action will avail a Mumukshu (seeker after liberation).

Note :

This is still another and vital reason for dropping Karma.

९४. सर्वः संसारः क्रियाकारकफललक्षणः सत्त्वरजस्तम आत्मको अविद्यापरिकल्पितः समूलोऽनर्थः ।

G. 81-41. Intr.

The whole of Samsara, manifested as action, instruments of action, the results made up of the 3 Gunas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and set up by (Avidya) ignorance is an evil, as also its source or root.

९५. अविद्यापूर्वकस्य कर्मणो विद्यैव शुभस्याशुभस्य वा क्षयकारणं, न नित्यकर्मनुष्ठानम् ।

G. 18-60.

Knowledge alone can cause the destruction of good and evil deeds caused by ignorance, and not the performance of Nitya Karma.

Note :

That good deeds too are causes of bondage is stated here. Nitya Karma as stated by the Vedas is a good work that will cause bondage and not destroy bondage. Bondage which is caused by "ignorance" can be neutralised and thus destroyed by knowledge only. Nitya Karma too is superfluous, nay dangerous, when one begins practice of ethical culture to destroy "ignorance". The Gita in Chapter XIII—7 to 11 describes this ethical culture. According to Mimamsakas, Nitya Karma should never be given up. Its abandonment will entail Pratyavaya (untoward and undesirable

consequences). This school holds that it is performance of Nitya Karma along with giving up Kamya Karma (actions for specific fruit) and Pratishiddha Karma (prohibited act) that forms the easy way to Moksha.

Here we have the evaluation of Karma by Sankara. Even the Karma which is best according to Mimamsakas has to be given up. That mental attitude of a sort of slavery to the injunctions of the eternal Vedas has to be replaced by a new attitude, viz. that the Vedas are revelatory (Jnapaka) and that Nitya Karma too can be given up without offence to God or fear of evil consequences. But mind cannot be a vacuum. The cultivation of ethical excellences has to be taken up. This alone leads to purity of mind bringing about realisation, See also 97.

Nitya Karma—Incentive not Sastra but Svabhava

९६. इष्टानिष्टप्राप्तिपरिहारार्थिनः तत्प्रेरितविशेषप्रवृत्तेः नित्यादीनिकर्माणि विधीयन्ते न केवलं शास्त्रनिमित्तमेव ।

Br. 1-3-1.

Nitya Karma (regular rites) is enjoined on those who are in quest of what is good and the avoidance of what is evil. Thus prompted they resort to regular acts. They are not performed solely in obedience to Scriptures.

Note:

See note to 48.

९७. ननु नित्यानां कर्मणां तु केवलशास्त्रनिमित्तत्वात् अनर्थार्थित्वाभावात् च अभावः न युक्त इति चेत्, न अविद्यारागद्वेषवतो विहितत्वात् ।

Br. III-1.

Is it not improper that regular rites (Nitya Karma) which are performed solely in obedience to Scriptures and (as such) produce no harmful effects, should stop on any account? Not so, for they are enjoined on one who has the defects such as ignorance, attachment and aversion.

Note:

See note to 95.

९८. तस्मात् स्वाभाविक्यैव अविद्यया युक्ताय रागादिदोषवते यथामितपुरुषार्थसाधनं कर्म उपदिशत्यग्रे । Br. 5-1-1-

Therefore to those who are possessed of natural ignorance and defects such as attachment and aversion, Scriptures first advise the performance of rites calculated to achieve the desired ends.

Note:

This specifies what sort of persons naturally takes to Karma.

९९. बाह्यविषयरागाद्यपह्यतचेतसो न शास्त्रं निवर्तयितुं शक्तम् । Br. 2-1-20.

The Scriptures are powerless to hold back those who are lured by attachment etc. to external objects.

Note:

Mimamsakas hold that Veda Vidhis (injunctions) have a peculiar power to impel persons to obey them. According to Sankara, natural desire for reward is the incentive to take up Vedic Karma. See Nos. 48 to 56. But according to Mimamsakas it is the above-mentioned subtle power of the Vidhis called Bhavana Sakti that draws one to Vedic act. The statement in No. 99 contraverts this as a matter of common experience. Against this experience the theory of subtle power of the Veda Vidhis put forward by Mimamsakas cannot stand.

१००. यद्यपि शास्त्रावगतं नित्यं कर्म तथापि अविद्यावत् एव भवति।
G. 18-66.

Though Nitya Karma is known (or taught) by the Sastra, even then it is meant only for the ignorant.

Note:

Nitya Karma, like all other Karmas, is also born of "ignorance," as others have to be abandoned even according to Mimamsakas (see note on 95) for attainment of Moksha. Similarly Nitya Karma, as progeny of Avidya, has to be abandoned to enable one to go higher up.

Urge like in Others, Kama

१०१. न च अग्निहोत्र-दर्शपूर्णमास-चातुर्मास्य-पशुबन्धसोमानां कर्मणां स्वतः काम्यनित्यत्वविवेकोऽस्ति कर्तुं गतेन हि स्वर्गादिकामदोषेण कामार्थता ।

Br. I-3-1.

Nor are rites such as Agnihotra, the new and full moon sacrifices, Chaturmasya, Pasubandha and Soma-saga intrinsically either rites with material ends or regular rites. They come under the former category only because a man who performs these has the defect of desiring heaven and so forth.

Note:

The essential features of Nitya Karma have been given towards the end of the Introduction to this chapter. Here Sankara analyses the cause of Nitya Karma and says that in this also the incentive is desire. Agnihotra is the typical Nitya Karma. Others are Naimittikas. These are all clubbed together here as Nityas. Sankara says there is nothing in the nature of these Karmas themselves to distinguish them as Nitya or Kamya. Karma is in the mind of the performer

of Karma and not in the nature of the sacrifice. The implication here is that in doing the Nitya Karma there is some desire or other in the mind of the performer as in the case of Kamya Karma. As such, the classification is not fully correct if it implies absence of desire in Nitya Karma, which is the contention of Mimamsakas.

Another and more important point is that like Kamya Karmas, Nitya Karmas too may be given up. 102. *Introduction*: Agnihotra is the typical Nitya Karma. The Vedic injunction for it is that "as long as life lasts. Agnihotra shall be done". So it should be done everyday throughout one's life. As no fruit is mentioned in connection with this injunction, it has no fruit. So it is not born out of desire. This is the interpretation of the Mimamsakas. They also say Nitya Karma yields no fruit.

१०२. न तु निरपेक्षमेव जीवननिमित्तमेव कर्तव्यं कर्म कानिचित् पुनः
पुनः अनुष्ठीयमानानि बहुफलानि कृष्यादिवत् वर्षशत-
समाप्तीनि; तदपेक्षया यावज्जीवश्रुतयः ।

Br 4-5-15

It is not without any consideration and solely because one is living that the regular rites (Nitya Karma) are enjoined for life. They produce many results when performed again and again like agriculture, etc. Hence in view of this fact Sruti enjoins life-long rites.

Note:

That "one is living" is the occasion for doing the Agnihotra. But it is not merely for that reason that this Karma is done. It is like agriculture. Every year man does cultivation, as year after year paddy or wheat is needed by man. One year's cultivation is not

expected to last for life. Each year it has to be done to obtain grain. Similarly if every day one performs Agni-hotra etc. the more is the fruit for him. It is with this motive of yielding more fruit as in agriculture that Agnihotra, etc. are prescribed to be done every day all through life. The result is not "no fruit" but "very much fruit". Nitya Karma too is done by the performer out of desire for very great fruit.

Omission causes no Pratyavaya

१०३. न हि नित्यानां अकरणात् अभावात् प्रत्यवायभावोपपत्तिः ।
नासतो विद्यते भावः, इति वचनात् ।

G. IV-18.

Indeed no evil can arise from non-existence, namely non-performance of a regular duty (Nitya Karma). The (Gita) saying runs thus: "Out of the unreal no real being comes."

Note :

Mimamsakas make two statements about Nitya Karma. (1) They bear no fruit. (2) If they are not done, the non-performance entails Pratyavaya (untoward consequences). The first has been negated by Sankara in 101 and 102 together. In this, he shows the untenability of the second proposition. Modern science tells of conversion of matter or energy. But science also tells us that nothing, energy or matter, can come out of void. The same is said by Sankara in regard to the creation of Phala. Pratyavaya is a fruit though a very undesirable fruit. Non-action is a void. Even an undesirable fruit cannot come out of a void. So people need not be frightened out of their wits by this ghost of Pratyavaya.

१०४. यदि विहिताकरणात् असंभाव्यमपि प्रत्यवायं ब्रूयात्
वेदस्तदा अनर्थकरो वेदः अप्रमाणं इत्युक्तं स्यात्, विहितस्य
करणाकरणयोः दुःखमात्रफलत्वात्।

G. III. Intr.

If the Vedas should teach what is inconceivable to us, viz. that evil arises from the omission of prescribed duties, it is tantamount to saying that the Vedas are therefore no authority, for performance and non-performance alike would produce only pain (for we know, action also is painful).

Note:

In this also both the contentions of the Mimamsakas, that there is no fruit in doing Nitya Karma and that its non-performance will entail evil consequences, are dealt with and their absurdity made clear. Agnihotra, though it does not yield any desirable fruit, does cause great inconvenience in its performance; often a lot of smoke arises from the fire and offends the eye and the nose during the performance. So, doing Agnihotra is only a cause for pain. Non-performance too brings evil in the form of hell. So how nice is Agnihotra! Both its performance and non-performance bring only pain. Will such an act be taken up by man. The Vedas enjoining such an act will not be accepted or respected—a proposition very distasteful to the Mimamsakas who pin all their faith on the Vedas and the Vedas alone.

१०५. तथा च कारकं शास्त्रं न ज्ञापकं इत्यनुपपन्नार्थं कल्पितं स्यात्।

G III. Intr.

This will lead to the further absurd conclusion that Sastra is creative, not indicative (or revelatory).

Note:

Karaka (creative) means making one compulsorily do a thing. If not, punishment will ensue. That is how the idea of Pratyavaya (evil consequence on non-performance) comes. The Sastras then become mandatory. This is quite contrary to No. 15.

It has Phala (fruit)

१०६. नित्यानां कर्मणां पुण्यफलत्वश्रुतेः ।

G. 18-16.

The Srutis declare that Nitya Karma produces merit (Punya) as its result.

Note:

That Nitya Karma has Phala or fruit is diametrically opposite to the views of the Mimamsakas who say it has no fruit.

१०७. अवश्यं हि कृतं कर्म काम्यं नित्यं वा स्वं फलं आरभत एव ।

G. 6. Int.

Indeed every action must necessarily produce its effect or fruit, whether it be a desire-born rite or regular rite (Nitya Karma).

१०८. नित्यस्य च कर्मणो वेदप्रमाणबोध्यत्वात् फलेन भवितव्यं अन्यथा वेदस्य आनर्थक्यप्रसंगात् ।

G. VI. Int.

We have also said that Nitya Karma (regular rite) as taught by so great an authority as the Vedas must produce a result of its own, since, otherwise the Vedas would serve no useful purpose.

१०९. कथमुच्यते नित्यकर्मणां फलत्यागः यथा वन्ध्यायाः पुत्रत्यागः?

नैष दोषः नित्यानामपि कर्मणां भगवता फलस्य दृष्टत्वात् ।

G. 18-2.

How is it that the abandoning of the fruits of Nitya Karma is spoken of? It is like speaking of the abandoning of a barren woman's son. No such objection can be raised here since in the opinion of the Lord even Nitya Karmas have fruits.

११०. एतत् नित्यानां कर्मणां फलवत्त्वे भगवद्वचनम् ।

G. 18-9.

These words of the Lord form the authority which declares that Nitya Karma produces fruits.

Phala within Samsara

१११. न नित्यानां (कर्मणां) संसारविषयफलत्वं इति चेत् न; सर्वं कर्मणां फलं व्याकृतं संसार एवेति ।

Br. Intro to 1-1.

Objection, (If at all, Nitya Karma will bring about fruits) why not they give non-ephemeral or eternal results? (unlike those of Kamya Karmas).

Note:

The Phala of Nitya Karma is not eternal joy but only transitory enjoyment, just like that of Kamya Karmas or other Kamas.

११२. उत्पत्त्याप्तिविकारसंस्काराणां अन्यतममपि नित्यानां कर्मणां फलम् प्रपद्यते ।

Br. III-3-1. Intr.

Any one of the functions of production, attainment, modification and purification will be the result of regular rites also.

Note:

The result of action will be any one of the following four:

(a) Production—a pot being created or produced out of clay;

- (b) Attainment—a man having no car gets a car.
A man in Madras goes and reaches Bombay;
- (c) Modification—milk becomes curd; water turns into hydrogen and oxygen;
- (d) Purification—a dull gold plate on polishing shines bright—attains a new purity.

११३. अवघातेन ब्रीहीणां तुषनिवृत्तौ गम्यमानायां, अग्निहोत्रादि-
नित्यकर्मकार्या अदृष्टा न कल्प्यते तुषनिवृत्तिः; तद्वत् अज्ञान-
निवृत्तिरपि नित्यकर्मकार्या अदृष्टा न कल्प्यते, ज्ञानेन
विरुद्धत्वं कर्मणां अवोचाम ।

Br. 3-3-1. Intr.

As when it is clear that threshing will husk paddy we do not presume that it is being done without our knowledge by the regular rites like Agnihotra, similarly we do not attribute the cessation of ignorance to the unseen power of the regular rites. We have repeatedly said that knowledge and work are contradictory.

Note:

Another important proposition of Sankara on Vedanta is stated here. (a) That ignorance is dispelled by knowledge. (b) This dispelling of ignorance by knowledge is a Drishta Phala, a thing within our experience, now and here, and not after somewhere. The analogy taken here is that of husking paddy. When threshing paddy gives rice, nobody will claim that the Agnihotra done by the father of the house, brought out rice from paddy. When things or events are within our experience, we do not bring unseen factors (Adrishta) as the cause of the phenomena. A portion in chemistry is confusing to a student; he then says that he is ignorant of that portion; he

thinks deeply of that portion, even seeks help of the teacher and then he grasps the subject. His ignorance is dispelled now by knowledge. He has a new insight in the matter. Exactly similar is the dispelling of spiritual ignorance by realisation. It is a fact of experience for great souls here and now.

But the contention of Mimamsakas is that performance of Nitya Karma here will give us Mukti after death, as an Adrishta Phala. This is refuted here by Sankara. The greatest citadel of Mimamsakas, their reliance of Nitya Karma for moksha, is demolished thus by Sankara and by Vedanta. 114 and 115 can be easily understood in the light of this note.

Also to be given up

११४. यद्यपि शास्त्रावगतं नित्यं कर्म तथापि अविद्यावत् एव भवति ।
G. 18-66.

Though the Nitya Karma (regular rite) is known from Scriptures, even then it is intended only for the ignorant.

११५. ननु नित्यानां तु केवलशास्त्रनिमित्तत्वात् अनर्थार्थत्वाभावात् च अभावः न युक्तः इति चेत् न ; अविद्यारागद्वेषवतो विहितत्वात् ।

Br. 1-3-1.

Is it not improper that regular rites (Nitya Karma) which are performed solely in obedience to the Scriptures and produce no harmful effect should stop on any account? No, for they are enjoined on one who has defects such as ignorance, attachment and aversion.

११६. यावदात्मज्ञानविरोधाभिमुख्यं तावदेव कर्मविधयः ।

Br. 4-5-15.

The injunctions about rites are operative only as long as confronted with those about self-knowledge.

One is averse to put oneself under the discipline for self-knowledge.

Note:

One clings to rituals as a child clings to a toy, and only until the implications of the knowledge of self and its means grip his mind. Karma Yoga is a great help in this.

**Nivritti Karma (Karma Yoga, the turn to Nivritti)
destroys bondage**

११७. यस्तु अधिकृतः संगं फलामिसंधिं च त्यक्त्वा नित्यं कर्म करोति तस्य फलरागादिना अकलुषीक्रियमाणं अन्तःकरणं नित्यैश्च कर्मभिः संस्क्रियमाणं विशुद्ध्यति ।

G. XVIII-10.

When a man feeling qualified for Nitya Karma (regular rites) works without attachment and without longing for results, his mind, unsoiled by desire for results and regenerated by (performance of) the regular acts, becomes pure.

Note:

Nitya Karma, in the light given to it by Mimamsakas, has been rejected, but not the Nitya Karma itself. The Nitya Karma of the Mimamsakas was rituals like Agnihotra. Nitya Karma for Gita and Vedanta includes also the social duties of Varnas (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras). The attitude of mind in the performance of these duties also has to be one of non-attachment. Thus Nitya Karmas are not altogether discarded but taken up and done in a new light for purification of mind. Even these Nitya Karmas done with desire will, as was contended till now, turn only into bondage.

११८. विशुद्धं प्रसन्नं आत्मावलोकनक्षमं भवति । G. 18-10.

When pure and tranquil, the mind becomes fit for the contemplation of the self.

११९. तस्यैव नित्यकर्मानुष्ठानेन विशुद्धान्तःकरणस्य आत्मज्ञानाभि-
मुखस्य क्रमेण ज्ञाननिष्ठा । G. 18-10.

For him whose mind has thus been purified by performance of regular acts and who thus becomes inclined to knowledge of the self, Jnana Nishta (stead-fast meditation of self) is the exact gradual step.

Note:

The higher step from Karma Yoga is Jnana Nishta.

१२०. किं स्वकर्मानुष्ठानादेव साक्षात्संसिद्धिः । न स्वकर्मणा
अन्तर्यामिणमीश्वरं पूजयित्वा केवलं ज्ञाननिष्ठानुष्ठान-
योग्यतालक्षणसिद्धिः भवति ।

G. 18-45 & 46.

Can this perfection be attained *directly* by the mere performance of one's own duty? No, Worshipping the Lord, the ruler within, by the performance of duty, man attains perfection; only, if he does thus, he becomes qualified for devotion to knowledge (Jnana Nishta).

Note :

Mechanical discharge of duty will not form Karma Yoga. The glow of detachment or dedication of the work to God must be present in the mind.

१२१. अभ्युदयार्थोऽपि प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो वर्णाश्रमदेवादिस्थानप्राप्ति-
हेतुरपि सन् ईश्वरार्पणबुद्ध्यानुष्ठीयमानः सत्त्वशुद्धये
भवति फलाभिसन्धिवर्जितः ।

G. Intr.

The external activity and rites enjoined on the several castes and religious orders as a means of prosperity lead the devotees to the region of the Devas and the like; still, when practised in a spirit of devotion to the Lord and without attachment to fruits, they conduce to the purity of the mind.

Note:

Varnasrama Karmas have been conceived at first as Pravritti Karmas (see note on 83 for Pravritti Karma). Pravritti Karma ceases to bind when done as Karma Yoga.

१२२. अतश्च अविद्यापूर्वकस्य कर्मणो विद्यैव शुभस्य वा अशुभस्य वा क्षयकारणं न नित्यकर्मानुष्ठानम् ।

G. XVIII-66.

So knowledge (realisation of the self) alone can cause the destruction of the good or evil deeds caused by Avidya (ignorance) and not the performance of the Nitya Karma (regular rites).

१२३. न परमात्मयाथात्म्यविज्ञानवतः शमोपायव्यतिरेकेण किञ्चित्-
कर्म विहितमुपलभ्यते ।

Br. 1-3-1

For one who knows the true nature of the supreme self, we do not find any other work enjoined, except what leads to the cessation of activities.

Note:

On discarding Karma, one should take up practices for the purification of the mind.

१२४. ते एते विद्याविद्याकार्ये सर्वात्मभावः परिच्छिन्नात्मभावश्च ।

Br. IV-3-20.

Thus the results of knowledge and ignorance identify with all, and identify with definite things or limited personality respectively.

१२५. सा चाविद्या न आत्मनः स्वाभाविको धर्मः यस्मात् विद्याया-
मुत्कृष्यमाणायां स्वयं अपचीयमाना सती काष्ठां गतायां
विद्यायां परिनिष्ठिते सर्वात्मभावे सर्वात्मना निवर्तते ।

Br. IV-3-20.

Ignorance is not the natural characteristic of the self since it automatically decreases as knowledge increases and when the latter is at its highest, ignorance vanishes altogether with the result that the self realises its identity with all.

Note :

The transition from giving up Karma to adopting steps for purification is a gradual process. The first gets attenuated and the second grows in strength. As ignorance and work are not a part of the nature of self, work can be given up. The test of true Jnana is feeling identity with all. This is the consummation (not even the highest enjoyment in heaven).

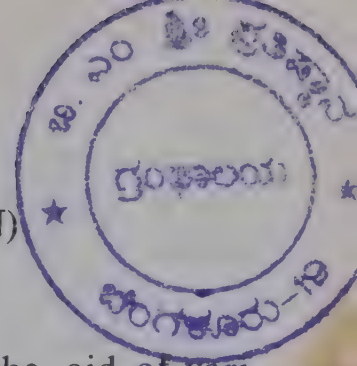
१२६. विद्वद्विषया च सर्वकर्मसंन्यासपूर्वका ज्ञाननिष्ठा ।

G. 18-66.

The sphere of the knowing (men of discretion) is Jnana Nishta preceded by the renunciation of all works.



CHAPTER III
UPASANA (MEDITATION)
INTRODUCTION



Karma may be physical, i. e. with the aid of various materials like wife, fire, oblations, etc. It may also be purely mental where none of the factors just mentioned are called into requisition. The Vedas teach that both alike are effective to gain the votaries their objectives. Upasana is that activity of the mind in which the flow of one single idea is continuously kept up, to the complete exclusion of all other ideas. The other name for Upasana, more commonly occurring in the Upanishads is "Vidya".

Vidya : Its Evolution

"Vidya" in modern Sanskrit, say in the age of the Mahabharata, means knowledge. But it did not bear this meaning in the old Sanskrit of the Upanishads. So, to always understand "Vidya" to mean knowledge and translate it accordingly is very often wrong. In the Upanishads, it most often means Upasana or meditation. The meaning of the word "Vidya" underwent a change due to the evolution of the mind of man in his search for Truth. In many English translations of the Upanishads, the older meaning of "Vidya" is not recognised and its translation as knowledge and of the verb "Veda" as "knows", conveys no significance in understanding passages where these occur.

Vidya comes from the root "Vid" to know. So Vidya is the attempt or process to know matters and things. As every process has its evolution and growth before it assumes its final form, Vidya too has had

its evolution and the texts of the Upanishads, especially Chandogya, have presented Vidya in various stages of its evolution, as it has also preserved Vidya in its most developed form. The motor cars of the early decades of the century did serve a purpose then. but no one would think of making use of them for one's journey now. Our attitude to many of the Vidyas need be similar to our attitude to the motor cars of the earlier decades. To consider that all Vidyas are of equal value to the spiritual life simply because they all occur in the Upanishad text, is like thinking that all the cars in a "motor museum" are of equal value to the present day motorist.

Vidyas arose when man began to seriously think that he might "know" about matters which eluded his grasp. When man attempts to know, his mind naturally becomes calm and concentrated; his imagination begins to play. Thus Vidya gets naturally associated with concentration along with imagination. Many stages have to be passed before the mystery is cleared up and the thing becomes "known".

These intermediate stages of concentration with imagination were distinguished and termed as Upasana, sitting near Truth and not reaching it, and the final stage is named Jnana. That is why in the Scriptural texts, the knowledge of Brahman is called Brahma Vidya. The Upanishads themselves recognise strong and clear imagery or image is called up in the distinction between the stages of development and its final culmination as Apra Vidya and Para Vidya.

Its Nature

Vidya is purely an activity of the mind when a strong and clear imagery or image is called up in

the mind and dwelt upon for long with great fervour; deepest concentration ensues. The mind is strengthened by meditation as the body by exercise. But purity of mind is of greater importance than strength of mind. Ravana had great strength of mind but not sufficient purity of mind. The evil tendencies of the mind, viz. desire, lust, greed, etc., have to be eradicated. Vasanas (tendencies of the mind) are great forces and the direction of one force can be altered, or the force itself neutralised, only by another and opposite force of equal or greater strength.

The calling up of these positive forces against the negative tendencies of the mind is consciously or unconsciously effected during meditation. This is a greater factor in meditation than even mere concentration. In fact, the strength generated in the mind by concentration has to be used for the conquest of Vasanas.

Upasana versus Jnana

When the strength of the mind is not used for the conquest of Vasanas, but to gain other results, it is termed Upasana. But when the strength gained is used for fighting the Vasanas and attachments and thus gaining purity of mind, it becomes Jnana Nishta or Jnana Yoga. This process or attempt ends in the flash of a new insight, a sixth sense, if it may be so called. This is Jnana. The Truth now stands revealed; the Self shines in all its glory comprehending all. Only Jnana is everlasting and never deserts man.

One sees with the eye and knows one aspect of a thing, its form—"this sugar is in good crystal form." When the sugar is tasted, it is found to be sweet. It is another aspect of sugar, to be known only by the tongue and not by the eye.

Thus each sense gives one aspect of the knowledge about a thing. Then we say "I have experienced it. I have no more doubts about its form or about its taste, etc". No argument can serve to sweep one off his feet regarding one or other aspects of that thing when it is thus known.

Apara Vidya and Para Vidya

By Yoga or meditation which serves to bring about Vasananasa (destruction of the lower tendencies) man, so to say, attains to his purest and subtlest state. Yoga restores man to his inherent divinity.

The cataract in the eye blinds it, but when the cataract is removed, the eye begins to function as before and sees. Properly understood, the operation of the eye for cataract does not confer on the eye any new power. The old power of the eye was obstructed by the cataract, and when the obstruction is removed, the power functions again. Religions say that man has lost his innate divinity. Desire, greed, and attachment constitute the cataract; meditation is the operation to remove it. Man then regains his original divinity which gives him a new insight. He sees the whole world as divine. Yoga means joining. As the process of meditation joins man once more to his innate divinity, it is known as Yoga, the most important act of joining.

This higher aspect of meditation, where the attempt is to burn the dross of the mind, is called Para Vidya. When the existence of the dross is not even recognised, and for various other purposes the mind is being strengthened by concentration, it is called Apara Vidya. Siddhis result from Apara Vidya and not Jnana (insight into Reality). That is why Raja

Yoga mentions as its first step Yama and Niyama (the control of the mind and the senses). Raja Yoga has simply codified the experience and teachings of the Rishis.

Sagunopasana and Nirgunopasana

The difference between these two arises from another factor altogether. When man takes up as the object for meditation the Atman in himself, which by all his effort he cannot conceive or imagine, which yet he knows as obstinately to exist as himself brooking no denial, it becomes Nirgunopasana. Here there is no prop to the mind. But when he posits an external God, he assigns a form to it given by tradition; that forms the prop for his mind, and meditation on God with the aid of this prop, say idol etc., constitutes Sagunopasana.

Pranava Vidya

One of the Vidyas which, because of its importance, has formed the one theme of Mandukya Upanishad and has been dealt with by other Upanishads as well (Katha and Prasna) is the Pranava Vidya. It is even today as popular among the Sanyasins as Gayatri is among Brahmacharins and householders.

Pranava is the name given to the sound "Om". It is sometimes called the mystic syllable "Om", as it is the prop for meditation. Sankara takes every opportunity to remind that "Om" is only a Pratika (symbol) as the sacred Saligram stone is of Vishnu. To mistake the Pratika itself as the object of worship is a great fall in the meditation and ought to be avoided.

But all Pratikas are extremely useful and helpful aids which cannot be dispensed with in the early

stages of the practice of meditation. "Om" is an extremely helpful Pratika because of its brevity for repetition and because of the high suggestiveness it can be made to evoke.

"Om" has a great similarity with Atman as follows. The sound "Om" has three components in its make up. They are "A", "U" and "M", and, when pronounced without haste, it prolongs itself into indefinite fourth component. These are called in the Mandukya Upanishad as the four Matras (components) of "Om".

Atman has three well-defined states which are within the everyday experience of all. The states are wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. But the Rishis say that these changing states of the same man must have a substratum. Changes cannot be observed if there is no substratum, just as the moving pictures of the cinema cannot be seen without the fixed background of a screen. So, the substratum to the changing states of man must necessarily exist. Not only reason indicates it, but Sages and Rishis of all lands have experienced it. The experiencing of this rock-bottom of man, the Atman, is the goal of all religions. All religious attempts have this end in view.

This substratum is by courtesy called the fourth state of man, Turiya. Turiya means fourth. This fourth state of man is more imponderable than perhaps the fourth component of "Om." In reality, it is the whole Real Man and not a fourth state at all. The three states are the waves while the fourth is the ocean itself.

Thus, both, "Om" and Atman have three well defined components or states, and a fourth one not so well defined. By a slow and prolonged utterance of

“Om,” the fourth component suggests itself and calls to our mind the indefinable substratum, viz. the real, Atman, and the devotee’s longing, to come face to face with Atman or God, is crowned with success.

Thus “Om” is a very powerful aid in the meditation for the realisation of God. The practice of meditation with the use of “Om” constitutes Pranava Vidya.

Nama Japa

Vidya has evolved still further in the post-Upa-nishadic period. Upasana means “sitting near”, i.e. sitting near God. Upasana has become most popular as Nama Japa, the repetition of the Name of God with great devotion and concentration. In the time of Gita itself, Nama Japa has sprung up. Gita states.

“यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि”

—Of the Yajnas, I (God) am Japa Yajna. So Japa (repetition) of Name is the best of Yajnas. In fact, that Nama Japa is the latest, most evolved, and most popular of the Upasanas. It has been the most popular with saints of all religions. It is a direct lineal descendant of Vidya.

Nama Japa has an advantage over “Om”. The meaning of “Om” is not apparent on the face of it. The Sadhaka has to be initiated into the meaning of “Om”. Its correspondence with the states of Atman has to be pointed out and explained. But the Nama automatically brings into the mind the various attributes of God. High, pure and noble associations drawn in the mind on the utterance of Nama. This is the great advantage Nama Japa has over “Om” and the cause of its popularity.

Everyone is welcome to choose the God's name familiar to him from his religious tradition. This is generally imparted to him by his Guru (religious teacher).

It has been the experience of the saints that Nama Japa can be used both in Sagunopasana as well as Nirgunopasana. Some, however, still consider "Om" as more suited for the Nirguna practice.

Another purpose of Upasana

Poor people may not be able to perform Aswamedha Yajna (the horse sacrifice) meant for the emperors, which enables them to attain the abode of Hiranyagarbha, the highest position imaginable by Karma. But they may be eager for the status conferred by the horse-sacrifice. Are they to be denied that status? No. They are to win the same status or higher world by Aswamedha Vidya, with a description of which Brihadaranyaka Upanishad opens. By practising that meditation properly, i.e. as has been delineated in the text, they attain that world without the help of any material factors.

The same holds good with other Yajnas also.

Upasana in general

The main agency as already stated in Upasana or Vidya is mental concentration "Chittaikagrya". The objects of meditation are various and the fruits are also equally various. The results of these, like those of Karma, are temporal and not eternal and entail rebirth. The objective of Upasana is the attainment of prosperity and not Truth.

This great difference has to be borne in mind as both Upasana and Jnana involve intense concentration. While Jnana is gasping to know the Truth, Upasana is thirsting only for prosperity. A Ravana may resort to

Upasana but not to Jnana. A Ramana Maharshi resorts to Jnana but not to Upasana.

Just as Vedic rituals, excepting the few referred to above, have on the whole fallen into disuse, especially those in the form of the various Yagas or sacrifices, even more so, the Vedic Upasanas have ceased to be current, except the Pranava Vidya (meditation on "Om") dealt with in Mandukya Upanishad as already mentioned. It has survived mostly in the form of Nama Japa.

But the death is always for the form and not for the spirit. The Yajnas in the fire have now taken shape as Pujas (worship) in temples. The Upasanas too must have taken rebirth in others forms. They had such a vital part in the life of the Aryans. It is by the use of these that they attained their miraculous powers, the Siddhis and the wonderful powers of the mind. The tradition in this connection could not have been lost but only developed. Upasanas have re-emodied themselves in the form of Yoga Sastra. What was more or less empirical in the Vedic times has now taken a more scientific shape in the Raja Yoga of Patanjali.

Upasanas as such, though found in large numbers in the Vedas, especially the two long Upanishads Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka, have not had any interpreters so far as is known. The two great interpreters of the Vedas are Jaimini for the Karma Kanda and Vyasa for the Jnana Kanda. The ritualist of Jaimini would not have anything to do with Upasana as it does not have the factors of fire, wife, oblations, etc. Vyasa has dealt with Upasanas in a casual way in Brahma Sutras, Chapter III, pada 3. Sankara, the great commentator

of Brahma Sutras, does not work himself into any enthusiasm over this section, for Upasana is not after all for Jnana, but for enjoyments and psychic powers. On the contrary, he is all enthusiasm in delineating the real Jnana.

In the view of the above mentioned Acharyas, the position of Upasanas is like that of a bat, which is neither a bird nor a beast and so not owned by any of these two groups as their own, because the Vedic Upasanas is neither a pure ritual nor a practice for Jnana. But, as Sankara observes, it has only the low status of Karma, कर्मन्तपातित्व (Karmaantapatitva), as it is like the Vedic Karma unable to release one from bondage. Yet, it has an aspect of the practice of Jnana, as both Upasana and Jnana Nishta are alike acts of intense mental cocentration.

PART A—STILL PRAVRITTI

Definitions

१२७. उपासनं नाम समानप्रत्ययप्रवाहकरणम् ।

S. B. IV-1. 7.

Upasana consists in making a current of similar ideas to flow continuously.

Note:

This gives a neat and pithy definition of Upasana.

१२८. उपासनं च यथाशास्त्रं तुल्यप्रत्ययसन्ततिः -

असंकीर्णा च अतत्प्रत्ययैः शास्त्रोक्तालंबनविषया च
प्रसिद्धश्च उपासनाशब्दार्थो लोके “गुरुमुपास्ते, राजान-
मुपास्ते” इति ।

Tai. 1-3-4.

By Upasana (meditation) is meant the continuous flow of similar ideas as prescribed by Sastras (Scriptures)

unmixed with any dissimilar ideas. The prop for the mind is the object as described by Sastra. The word Upasana as well as its meaning is well known from its usage in ordinary life. "He does Upasna (to constantly think of and serve) to his Guru to win his favour. "He does Upasana to the king."

१२९. उपासनं नाम यथाशास्त्रं उपास्यार्थस्य विषयीकरणेन,
सामीप्यमुपगम्य, तैलधारावत् समानप्रत्ययप्रवाहेण दीर्घकालं
यदासनम् । G. 12-3.

Upasana (meditation) consists in approaching the object of worship as instructed by the Sastra by visualising it and dwelling on it for a long time steadily in a current of the same idea, continuous like a flowing thread of oil.

Note :

The relevant text alone is the basis for the mental imagery. So Upasana in this respect is similar to Karma, where also the details should be neither more nor less than what is prescribed in the text.

१३०. तैलधारावत् सन्ततो अविच्छिन्नप्रत्ययो ध्यानम् ।

G. 13-24.

Dhyana (meditation) is continuous and unbroken thought like a line of flowing oil.

१३१. उपासनं निदिध्यासनं च, इति अन्तर्णीतावृत्तिगुणैव क्रियाभिधीयते । लोके "गुरुमुपास्ते, राजानमुपास्ते" इति यः तात्पर्येण गुर्वादीननुवर्तते, स एवं उच्यते । तथा ध्यायति प्रोषितनाथा पतिमिति । या निरन्तरस्मरणा पतिं प्रति सोत्कण्ठा सैवमभिधीयते ।

S. B. IV-1-1

Such terms as "Meditation", "being devoted to" and "reflecting" denote actions conducted within (in the

mind) in which repetition is implied as a quality. Thus we say in ordinary life that a person is devoted to a teacher or a king if he follows him with a mind steadily set on him; and of a wife whose husband has gone on a journey that she thinks of him, only if she steadily remembers him with great longing.

149(b) and 178(c) are also definitions of Upasana.

१३२(ए) विद्युपास्तयोश्च वेदान्तेषु अव्यतिरेकेणैव प्रयोगो दृश्यते ।

(बी) वेदोपासनशब्दयोः एकार्थता अवगम्यते ।

(सी) भवति हि शब्दभेदः “वेद” “उपासीत” “स क्रतुं कुर्वति” इत्येवमादिः । इह न अर्थभेदः, सर्वेषामेवैषां मनोवृत्त्यर्थत्वाऽभेदात् अर्थान्तरा । संभवाच्च ।

S. B. III-3-58.

(a) In Vedanta (texts) the terms “Vidya and Upasana” (knowing and meditation) are used one in place of the other.

(b) Thus it is clear that the words “Veda” and “Upasana” have the same meaning.

(c) There occur (in the Vedas) different expressions like “Veda” (knows) “Upasita” (meditates) and “he does an act of faith.” But no difference in meaning occurs. There is no difference between these because of the fact that all alike relate to the “activity and attitude of the mind”. They cannot refer to anything else.

Note:

The well-known meaning of the verb “Veda” is “knows”, but it has also another meaning Upasita (meditates). This has to be well remembered when the word Veda occurs in Upasana sections, as it very often does. Even great scholars, while translating this word trip upon this word while giving its meaning and

translation as “knows” and the reader is confused. Sankara clears this confusion in these passages.

Like Karma

१३३. कर्तृत्वादिसर्वसंसारधर्मनिराकरणेन हि ब्रह्मणः आत्मत्वो-
पदेशः । तदनिराकरणेन च उपासनविधानम् । अतश्चोपास-
कस्य प्रतीकैः समत्वात् आत्मग्रहो नोपपद्यते ।

S. B. 4-1-4.

The injunction for meditation does not require the non-removal of the characteristics (of the self) as an actor and other signs of transmigratory existence. Hence for the meditating person, as he attains only sameness with the symbol (Pratika) there does not ensure the “Possession” as it were with the self (Brahman) i.e. self-realisation.

Note :

In Upasana, one's mind is set generally on form of enjoyment or power etc. The Upasaka is not called upon to cast off his ego, which as such feels as the actor and longs for the result. In some Upasanas he attains identity with the Pratika. Christian saints often attained identity with Christ. But as the longing is not for Truth, there results no self-realisation.

१३४. उपासनानां क्रियात्मकत्वात् ।

S. B. 3-3-42.

Because, in its inner core, Upasana is a Kriya (ritual).

Note :

In Upasana as in Karma there is no longing to cast off Samsara and attain self-realisation. In both these, the idea that Samsara by its very nature, is the cause of misery, has not dawned on the mind of man (see also *Note* to 136.)

१३५. आत्मा हि नामाधिकृतः कर्मण्युपासने च संसारी कर्मोपासनं वा साधनमनु यत् ब्रह्मादिदेवान् स्वर्गं वा प्राप्नुं इच्छति । तत्तस्मादन्य उपास्यो विष्णुरीश्वरः इन्द्रः प्राणो वा ब्रह्म भवितुं अर्हति । न तु आत्माः- लोकप्रत्ययविरोधात् ।

Kena 1-5.

The Atman is subject to births and rebirths and feels that it has to resort to Karma and Upasana. By performing Karma and Upasana as means, it desires to attain the Lokas of Brahma or other Devas or heaven. So it is but natural that these objects of worship, Vishnu, Iswara, Indra or Prana should be entities different from Atman and not one with Atman as that is contrary to the world by experience. Just as "logicians" contend that Atman is different from Iswara, so also votaries of Karma (and Upasana) worship or meditate on Devas different from themselves.

Note :

The worshipper never wishes to lose his individuality in Upasana or (Bhakti of later days). The difference between Bhakta and the Lord is kept up. This is the attitude adopted by all Dvaitins, believers in duality or even multiplicity. Logicians are Nyayayikas. Nyaya constitutes one of the six famous schools of philosophy (Shad Darsanas).

Why Necessary?

१३६.(ए) अस्य तु अश्वमेधसंबन्धिनो विज्ञानस्य प्रयोजनं, येषां अश्वमेधे नाधिकारः तेषां अस्मादेव विज्ञानात् फलप्राप्तिः ।

(बी) कर्मविषयत्वमेव विज्ञानस्य इति चेत् न । योऽश्वमेधेन यजते, य उ चैनमेवं वेद इति विकल्पश्रुतेः ।

Br. Intro.

(a) The utility of mediation concerning the horse sacrifice is this: Those who are not entitled to this

sacrifice will get the same result through this meditation itself.

(b) Objection: This meditation is just a part of that rite.

Reply: No, for the following Sruti passage allows option: "Those who perform the horse sacrifice or who know (meditate on) it as such."

Note :

The famous Brihadaranyaka Upanishad opens with a description of the Upasana on the Aswamedha sacrifice. Here the horse to be sacrificed is the cosmic being, Hiranyagarbha himself, as described in the text. The rule in Karma and Upasana is that the prescription of these two, as given by the text, should not be deviated even by a hair's breadth. These texts do not admit of the question "Why is no deviation allowed?" Here is another similarity between Upasana and Vedic Karmas. See *Note* to 134.

१३७. ये स्त्रोत्रियाः स्थूलबुद्धित्वात् अजातिवस्तुनः सदा आत्मनां पश्यन्ति, तेषां श्रद्धधानानां सन्मार्गावलम्बिनां जात्युपलम्भ-
कृता दोषाः सिद्धिं नोपयास्यन्ति । Mu. IV-42-143.

(Brahman is unborn and Nirguna). Some devotees of the Vedas, not being of sharp intellect, shrink back from the unborn or unmanifest (Nirguna) Brahman (as an object of meditation). For such the wise have conceded meditation with form. As these are full of faith and of correct conduct, the harm done by meditation with form (on the formless Brahman) will be very little.

Note :

The meditation on Saguna Brahman is recognised as an essential and inevitable step for many. Only it

should not be conceived that there is no higher step. Nirgunopasana or Jnana Nishta is higher. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, benefited by Sagunopasana on Kali, later on had to go up to Nirgunopasana under the guidance of Tota Puri and realise the Advaita state.

१३८. न हि अविकारे अनन्ते ब्रह्मणि सर्वैः पुंभिः शनया बुद्धिः
स्थापयितुं मन्दमध्यमोत्तमबुद्धित्वात् पुंसामिति ।

S. B. III-2-33.

For, as some men are of inferior, others middling, others again of superior intelligence, not all are capable of fixing their mind on the infinite Brahman devoid of any change or transformation.

१३९. निर्गुणमपि सद्ब्रह्म नामरूपगतैः गुणैः सगुणं उपासनार्थं तत्र तत्र
उपदिश्यते इत्येतदपि उक्तमेव । सर्वगतस्यापि ब्रह्मणः
उपलब्ध्यर्थं स्थानविशेषो न विरुध्यते, शालग्राम इव विष्णोः
इत्येतदपि उक्तमेव ॥

S. B. 1-2-14.

It is but appropriate that Brahman although devoid of qualities is prescribed by various texts for purposes of meditation as possessing qualities depending on name and form. It is not inappropriate to assign specific places for the Omnipresent Brahman as it serves as a prop (to the mind) in meditation, just as it is justifiable to contemplate Vishnu in the sacred Saligrama (stone).

Note:

It is a postulate with thoughtful Hindus that the sacred Saligrama stone itself does not form the object of worship, but while facing Saligrama, he is reminded of Vishnu who then becomes the object of worship or meditation. This is so well and so clearly understood by modern Hindus that Sankara uses this analogy

for explaining meditation. "Om" and other symbols form the objects of Vedic meditations as mere Pratikas, symbols like Saligrama. Here is clear occasion to understand the principle of idol worship.

१४०. रूपाद्याकाररहितमेव ब्रह्मावधारयितव्यं न रूपादित् । कस्मात् ।
तत्प्रधानत्वात् । S. B. 3-2-14.

It must be definitely concluded that Brahman is devoid of any kind of form. Why? For this is the main purport of Scripture.

Note:

The main function of the Upanishads to be delineate the true nature of Brahman or Atman. But during the process of spiritual evolution, the Upasanas come into existence as stages on the way. An intermediate step, however attractive, should not be mistaken for the final goal.

Vidyas various

१४१. इतराणि तु आकारवद्ब्रह्मविषयाणि वाक्यानि न तत्प्रधानानि ।
उपासनाविधिप्रधानानि हि तानि । तेषु असति विरोधे यथाश्रुतं
आश्रयितव्यम् । S. B. 3-2-14.

Other (passages), on the other hand, which refer to Brahman as qualified by form have not the aim of setting forth the true nature of Brahman. They are mainly enjoined to serve as prop in meditation. These forms may be resorted to for meditation exactly as described by the text if no contradiction is involved.

Note:

As already stated in Note to 136, in doing Upasana as in Karma, no deviation from the text, is to be tolerated in forming the mental conception of the object given by the text.

१४२. मनोवृत्त्यर्थत्वाभेदेऽपि अनुबन्धभेदात् वेद्यभेदे सति विद्याभेदोपपत्तेः।
S. B. III 3-58.

Even though mentation is a common feature in all meditations, meditations themselves become different when there are differences in the attributes assigned to God.

Note:

God is one and attributeless. But to Him are assigned various attributes by the Upasaka. Thus even though the one God is the object of meditation, the meditations dealt with in the Vedas become different with the difference in the attributes assigned.

१४३. भिन्नो हि प्रतिविद्यम् ब्रह्मणः आकारः उपदिश्यते ।

In the different meditations, different forms of Brahman are inculcated.

Pranava Vidya

१४४. द्वे विद्ये इत्यादि । परा च परमात्मविद्या । अपरा च धर्माधर्म-
साधन तत्फलविषया । अपरा हि विद्या अविद्या । सा निरा-
कर्तव्या । तद्विषये हि विदिते न किञ्चित् तत्त्वतो विदितं स्यात् ।

Mun. 1-4.

There are two sorts of knowledge to be attended to. The one is Para (great), the knowledge of Paramatman, and the other is Apra (not great) which deals with the means and result of Dharma (duty) and Adharma (blameworthy act). The Apra Vidya is indeed ignorance. It ought to be discarded: when a knowledge of Apra Vidya is gained, nothing indeed relating to Truth is known.

Note:

By Apra Vidya is comprehended Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda, as also Siksha

(phonetics), Kalpa (the code dealing with rituals), Grammar, Nirukta (science of etymology) Chandas (metre) and Astrology. The latter six are known as Vedangas, the limbs of the Vedas i.e. of the first four.

१४५(ए) उपनिषद्वेद्याक्षरविषयं हि विज्ञानं इह परा विद्येति प्राधान्येन विवक्षितम् । न उपनिषच्छब्दराशिः । वेदशब्देन तु सर्वत्र शब्दराशिः विवक्षितः ।

(बी) वेदशब्दराश्याधिगमेऽपि यत्नान्तरमन्तरेण, गुर्वभिगमनादि लक्षणं वैराग्यं च न अक्षराधिगमः सम्भवतीति पृथक्करणं ब्रह्मविद्याया अथ परा विद्येति ।

Mun. 1-5.

(a) By the term “Para Vidya” is meant primarily in this context the knowledge (realisation) of the immortal which could be known through the Upanishads and not the mere assemblage of words in them (Upanishads). But ordinarily everywhere by the term Vidya is understood the assemblage of words.

(b) The immutable cannot be realised by a mere mastery or the assemblage of words, without other efforts such as the approaching of a Guru and spurning of all desires etc. The separate classification of the knowledge of Brahman and its designation as Para Vidya are thus proper.

Note :

Here Sankara points to the necessity of Guru over and above comprehending texts. A flaming torch is necessary to kindle another.

१४६. मन्दमध्यमधियां तु प्रतिपन्नसाधकभावानां सन्मार्गगामिनां संन्यासिनां मात्राणां पादानां च क्लृप्तसामान्यविदां यथावदुपास्यमान ओङ्करः ब्रह्मप्रतिपत्तये आलम्बनीभवति ।

Mandukya 12.

For people of slow or middling intellect, but who are Sanyasins engaged in Sadhana and lead a virtuous life, a right meditation of "Om" based on the close and exact correspondence between the four states of the Atman and four parts of 'Om' becomes a prop to the mind in their effort to attain Brahman.

Note :

This correspondence between Atman and Om has been dealt with in the Introduction to this Chapter under the section Pranava Vidya. It may be read once more here.

१४७(ए) "ओं" शब्दवाच्यं "ओं" शब्द प्रतीकं च ब्रह्म Ka. 2-15.

अपरपरब्रह्मणोः हि प्रतीकं एतदक्षरम् । एतद्धि एव अक्षरं ज्ञात्वा
(ब्रह्मेत्युपास्य) यो यदिच्छति परं अपरं वा तस्य तत् भवति ।

(बी) परं चेत् ज्ञातव्यं अपरं चेत् प्राप्तव्यं । Ka. 2-16.

आत्मनोऽशेषविशेषरहितस्यालम्बनत्वेन प्रतीकत्वेन च ओंकारो
निर्दिष्टः, अपरस्य च ब्रह्मणः मन्दमध्यम प्रतिपत्तृन् प्रति ।

Ka. 2-18.

(a) The sound "Om" indicates Brahman. It is also a Pratika (symbol) for Brahman. This letter "Om" is indeed the symbol for both the Higher (unmanifested) Brahman and lower (manifested) Brahman. By meditating on this (Om) as Brahman he attains to whichever he wants the Para or the Apra. If it is Para, it has to be known. If it is Apra it is to be reached (meditated upon,)

(b) The sound "Om" has been pointed out as a prop and a symbol of the Atman devoid of all attributes, as also for those with slow and middling capacity for understanding. (It becomes the prop and symbol) for attaining to the Apra-Brahman (the one with attributes.)

Note:

It has to be clearly understood that there are no two Brahmanas one higher and the other lower. There is only one Brahman. But man conceives of it in two ways according to his capacity for understanding. For Samyak Darsana his nature in man as Atman, beyond the three states of waking, dreaming or deep sleep, has to be reached. In other terms, Brahman in his true nature, as without any attributes, has to be meditated upon. But this is extremely difficult.

So many conceive of Brahman as with attributes as say, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe, as the all-compassionate and all-mighty etc. Worship of Him in anyone of these aspects, is Saguna Vidya. In fact, meditation is of two sorts and not Brahman. "Om" the symbol can be made use of for both sorts of meditation.

१४८. परं हि ब्रह्म शब्दाद्युपलक्षणानर्हं सर्वधर्मविशेषवर्जितं अतो न शक्यं अतीन्द्रियगोचरत्वात् केवलेन मनसा अवगाहितुं ।

(ए) ओंकारे तु विष्णवादि प्रतिमास्थानी । ये भक्त्यावेशितब्रह्मभावे ध्यायमानं तत् प्रसीदति इत्यवगम्यते शास्त्रप्रामाण्यात् । तथाऽपरं च ब्रह्म ।

(बी) तस्मात् परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदोङ्कार इत्युपचर्यते ।

(सी) तस्मादेवं विद्वान् एतेनैव आत्मप्राप्तिसाधनेनैव ओङ्काराभिध्यानेन एकतरं परमपरं वा ब्रह्मानुगच्छति ।

(डी) नेदिष्ठं ह्यालम्बनमोङ्कारं ब्रह्मणः

अपरं च ब्रह्म प्राणाख्यं हिरण्यगर्भाख्यं प्रथमजं च यत् ।

Prasna—5-2.

Indeed the Higher (attributeless) Brahman, incapable of being indicated by words, devoid of all qualities and attributes and thus being beyond the reach of the

senses, is incapable of being grasped by the mere mind. But, on the authority of the Sastras, to those worshippers who meditate on the syllable "Om" as upon the image of Vishnu etc. and regard it as a symbol of Brahman, the Brahman is understood to reveal itself.

(a) Therefore that Brahman, whether higher or lower, is by courtesy said to be the symbol "Om".

(b) So he who knows this aid to the attainment of Atman, by meditation on "Om" attains one of these, either Para or Apra Brahman.

(c) Indeed the syllable "Om" is the nearest prop to Brahman.

१४९(ए) परापरब्रह्मप्राप्तिसाधनत्वेन ओंकारस्योपासनम् । परं सत्यं
अक्षरं पुरुषाख्यम् । अपरं च प्राणाख्यं प्रथमजम् ।

(बी) बाह्यविषयेभ्यः उपसंहृतकरणः समाहितचित्तः भक्त्यावेशित-
ब्रह्मभावे ओङ्कारे आत्मप्रत्ययसन्तानाविच्छेदः अभिन्नजातीय
प्रत्ययान्तराऽखिलीकृतो निवातस्थदीपशिखासमोऽभिध्यान ।
शब्दार्थः । सत्य-ब्रह्मचर्य-अहिंसा अपरिग्रह त्याग-सन्यास-
शौचसन्तोषामायावित्वाद्यनेकयमनियमानुग्रहीतः सः ॥

Prasna. V-1.

(a) The meditation on the symbol "Om" is a means for the attainment of Para and Apra Brahman. Para, the true, the immutable, is known as Purusha, the lower Brahman is known as Prana, the "first born."

(b) The word Abhidhyana (meditation) denotes the following state of the mind where the senses are turned away from the external objects; the mind composed and with intense devotion dwells on Brahman symbolised by "Om" on which the idea of Atman is imposed ceaselessly and without any break by othe

ideas, and thus the one-pointed mind is comparable to the steady flame protected from drafts of the wind.

One who meditates thus for his life, maintaining also the vows of truth, abstinence from sensual pleasures, non-injury, non-acceptance (of gifts), renunciation, Sanyasa, cleanliness, cheerfulness, absence from fraud and many other kinds of control, external and internal, can be said to be one who observes vow (of purtiy) for life.

१५०. परापरब्रह्मदृष्ट्या हि उपास्यमान ओंकार शब्दमात्रोऽपि परापरब्रह्मसाधनं भवति । सत्यालंबनं ब्रह्मणः परस्यापरस्य च प्रतिमेव विष्णोः ओमित्येतच्छब्दरूपं ब्रह्म इति मनसा उपासीत ।

Tai. 1-8.

Indeed "Om" is being meditated upon from the viewpoints of Para-Brahma and Aparā Brahma. Even though it is mere sound, it becomes the means for the attainment of attributeless Brahman as well as Brahman with attributes. It is a peg to hang on the idea of Brahman in the aspects of Para and Aparā, just as the idol is for the idea of Vishnu. "Om" has to be mentally meditated upon as the sound form of Brahman.

Note :

Sankara brings to our attention the use of the word इव (as) in the text. It tells us प्रतीक is not really Brahman, but has to be assumed as Brahman.

Results

१५१. तस्मात् महतो ब्रह्मणो विज्ञानप्रतीकेन उपासनात् ज्ञानैश्वर्यवन्तः भवन्ति ।

Tai. 2-5.

Therefore by the meditation of the great Brahman with the aid of a mental symbol, one becomes lordly and with knowledge.

Note:

Rewards of lower order, like great scholarship and wisdom, as also worldly prosperity can be obtained by appropriate Upasana.

१५२. यथा गुणोपासनं एव हि फलम् ।

Br. II 1-2.

Though the highest self is one only, the Lord distinguished by different qualities becomes the object of different meditations; the fruits (of meditation) vary in accordance with qualities attributed (to the Lord) in the meditation. He who meditates on the highest self by means of the symbol "Om" as consisting of three Matras obtains for his (first) reward the world of Brahman, and after that gradually complete intuition (self realisation)

Note :

The first three components of "Om" correspond to the well known three states of Atman - waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The transcendental aspect of Atman or Brahman does not come within the reach of the mind. So the highest stage of the manifested, the Brahma Loka only is attained by this Upasana. But there is Karma Mukti (gradual attainment of Moksha) when the period of rule of Brahma is over, the soul in Brahma Loka attains final release along with Brahma or Hiranyagarbha. Dvaitins are perfectly satisfied with this kind of Moksha. The Advaitin's aspiration and hope is Sadyo Mukti (release here and now).

१५३. एवं एकोऽपि सन् ऐश्वर्ययोगात्, अनेकभावं आपद्य सर्वाणि
आविशति ।

S. B. IV. 4-15.

Thus (by this discipline) even though the Upasaka is single, by acquiring the powers of the Lord, he becomes many and enters all bodies.

Note:

One of the wonderful powers (Siddhis) of an Upasaka is given here. By appropriate Upasana or Yoga, the Upasaka can by great powers of his mind, enter the mind of others: i.e. understand and influence their minds, as easily as if he were himself in their minds. This power to read and influence other minds is termed here “becomes many and enters all bodies”, viz. “Parakaya Pravesa (Jiva itself entering the body of others).” This Parakaya Pravesa is often misunderstood. Thus Sri Sankara is said to have laid aside his body and his Jiva then entered the dead body of the king of Benares to experience all kinds of erotic emotions and reply to questions on erotics put to him by the Lady Umpire at his famous controversy with the great Mimamsa scholar, Mandana Misra, who on defeat graciously became his equally famous disciple Sureshwaracharya.

This sort of leaving the body and entering another body is a crude interpretation of the power of “Parakaya Pravesa”. It is quite unnecessary for great Yogis like Sankara or Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa to leave their bodies and enter other bodies. They could read the experience of other minds or influence them merely by the highly superior power of their own minds. Indeed their Siddhis were most wonderful and of the very highest order, seldom reached by other Yogis.

१५४. सगुणविद्यापाकावस्थानं तु एतत् स्वर्गादिवत् अवस्थान्तरं यत्र
तत् ऐश्वर्यं उपचर्यते । S.B. IV 4-16.

On the Saguna (with attributes) meditation ripening, he becomes successful in the attainment of changed state like the Paradise. Then his prosperity or lordly state comes about.

Note :

Even praiseworthy acts like worship etc. cause bondage if done with desire, as is usually the case. The warning given in this and No. 155 has to be well kept in mind and non-attachment cultivated.

१५५. सर्वासामेव अभ्युदयप्राप्तिफलानां सगुणानां विद्यानां, अविशेषेण एषा देवयानाख्या गतिः भवितुमर्हति । S. B. III-3-31.

In all Saguna meditation practised with a view to the attainment of prosperity, without exception, reference to travelling by the "path of Devatas" is proper.

Note :

After death, the soul's journey to the abode of the Devas is referred here. Saguna meditation leads to rebirth.

१५६. फलं तु अतिथ्याद्युपासने इव आदित्याद्युपासनेऽपि ब्रह्मैव दास्यति, सर्वाध्यक्षत्वात् ।

The bestower of fruit even in the case of meditation on the sun is Brahma himself as he is the bestower of the reward in the case of honouring a guest, for he is the presiding Deity in all.

Note :

Here the allusion is to the contention of the Mimamsakas. Earlier Mimamsakas had no place for God in their scheme for the attainment of Parama Purushartha—the supreme end and aim of man. With them the Karma itself has the potency to bestow fruits. No factor other than Karma is required. So they contend that to bring in God is superfluous and unwarranted. This is one other of the great points of difference between Mimamsakas and Vedantins. The main point of difference in the practice of Religion

is the importance assigned to Nitya Karma by the two schools.

१५७. अस्यां उपनिषदि कर्माङ्गसम्बन्धिनि, कर्मसमृद्धिफलानि, अम्युदयसाधनानि, कैवल्यसंनिवृष्टफलानि, अद्वैतात् ईषद्विकृतब्रह्मविषयाणि “मनोमयः” प्राणशरीरः” इत्यादीनि च उच्यन्ते ॥

Cha. Ints.

In this Upanishad (Chandogya) are mentioned certain Upasanas which are connected with factors of ritual to make them richer (in fruit), others as means to bring about prosperity, others have results to approximate to liberation, and still others relate to Brahman slightly modified from the non-dual as in the passage “consisting of mind, and with a body of Prana” etc.

१५८. वैराजं पदं ज्ञानकर्मसमुच्चयानुष्ठानेन प्राप्नोति ।

एतावत् (वैराजं पदं) हि अतिक्रान्तेन विधिप्रतिषेधार्थेन मन्त्रब्राह्मणेन अवगन्तव्यम् वस्तु ।

Ka. 1-20.

वरद्वयसूचित न आत्मतत्त्वविषययाधात्म्यं विज्ञानम् ॥

One attains to the position of the Virat by the continued practice of Upasana and Karma. Thus much (the position of the Virat) which has been indicated by the two boons to Nachiketas, is alone the province of Mantras and Brahmanas which are mandatory or prohibitory in their import, and not any knowledge relating to the true nature of the Atman.

Note :

Here ज्ञान is used in the sense of Vidya or Upasana. Sankara's oft-repeated contention is that real knowledge (realisation) is quite opposed to Karma. In one, mind goes within and in the other, it goes outside. Real knowledge comes with the death of ego. But he points out that Karma is not opposed to lower

meditation, Upasana. In both egoism is maintained without the least impair. The teachings of Samhita and Brahmana portions of the Vedas, in general, do not deal with the inquiry into Truth. The enquiry into truth is taken up mainly in Upanishads. See No. 169 and also No. 177 (a).

१५९. कानिचित् ब्रह्मणः उपासनानि कर्म समृद्धयर्थानि, कानिचित् अभ्युदयार्थानि कानिचित्क्रममुक्त्यर्थानि, तेषां गुणविशेषोपाधि-भेदेन भेदः ।

एक एव तु परमेश्वरः तैस्तैः गुणविशेषैः विशिष्टः उपास्यो भवति । यथागुणोपासनं एव फलानिभिभिद्यन्ते ।

S. B. 1-1-12. Intr.

त्रिमात्रेण ओङ्कारेण आलम्बनेन परमात्मानमभिध्यायतः फलं ब्रह्मलोकप्राप्तिः क्रमेण च सम्यग्दर्शनोत्पत्तिरिति क्रममुक्तिः ।

S. B. 1-3-13.

Some of the Upasanas of Brahman are meant to bring about great potency to the ritual, others are meant to confer prosperity and the purpose of still others is the attainment of Krama Mukti (gradual release). The difference in results is due to difference in qualities assigned (to Brahman) and the conditions attached (to him).

Note:

Krama Mukti (gradual release) has been dealt with in No. 152 and its *Note*.

१६०. हिरण्यगर्भोपासनेन हि अणिमादिप्राप्तिः अनैश्वर्यादिमृत्युतरणं च ।

Is. 14.

By the meditation of Hiranyagarbha one attains Siddhis like Anima etc. and conquers natural evil acts and thus crosses over relative death (living of an animal life).

Note :

Yoga Sastra mentions of eight Siddhis or miraculous powers like becoming small as an atom, etc.

१६१, यत्तु वायुविज्ञानात् क्वचित् मृतत्वं अभिहितं तदापेक्षिकम् ।

S. B. 1-3-39.

The immortality mentioned as obtainable from the meditation of Vayu (here Hiranyagarbha) is merely a relative one and not Moksha.

Results Drishta (with in experience)

१६२. तस्यतस्य ब्रह्मणः साक्षात् उपलब्ध्यर्थं च उपासनार्थं च हृदया-
काशः स्थानमित्युच्यते सालग्राम इव विष्णोः। तस्मिन् हि
तत् ब्रह्म उपास्यमानं मनोमयत्वादिधर्मविशिष्टं साक्षात्
उपलभ्यते, पाणाविवामलकम् ।

Tai. 1-6-1.

For the realisation of Brahman as well as meditation of it, the centre (for meditation) is said to be Hridayakasa (the ether within the heart of man) just as the sacred Saligrama (stone) is for meditation of Vishnu. Meditated as if there is Hridaya (heart) and qualified with the attribute "full of consciousness etc." he comes within our view as the fruit (Amalaka) does on our palm.

Note :

In higher Saguna Vidyas, there is a kind of realisation. The god may be seen in certain form as in a vision by the devotee. He alone sees it but not others present with him. Thus Sri Ramakrishna had visions of Kali, and spoke to her and got replies.

Swami Ramdas of Anandashram had visions of Sri Krishna, Christ and Buddha at different times of his life. But he says these visions are not of great significance. They may be taken to be indications of the Sadhaka's progress. The unitive vision alone is

the final and lasting one. The whole universe is then seen as but one and divine. This experience has been within the reach of sages of all lands.

१६३. साक्षात्करणसाध्यं च विद्याफलं दर्शयन्ति श्रुतयः ।

S .B. III-3-58.

The Vedas indicate that the fruit of meditation is capable of being realised.

Note :

Success in Upasana is attained only when, by intense concentrated thought, identity with the object of Upasana is achieved. "By meditation on that, he becomes that."

१६४. अविशिष्टं हि आसां फलं उपास्यविषयसाक्षात्करणम् ।

S. B. III-3-59.

Their fruit is indeed invariably the realisation (seeing as if it were visible) of the object of meditation.

Not all Upasanas have Drishta Phala

१६५. काम्यासु विद्यासु क्रियावत् अदृष्टेन आत्मना आत्मीयं फलं साधयन्तीषु साक्षात्करणापेक्षा नास्ति । S. B. 3-3-60.

In the Vidyas connected with the attainment of definite desires where the special results are achieved by means of their unseen principle (as in the case of Karma) there is no expectation of realisation (identification with the object of meditation).

Note :

Some Vidyas are intended to produce unseen results only, the results are expected only after death.

१६६. य एवं वेद तेजस्वी अन्नादो भवति सर्वमायुरेति ज्योर्जीवति महान् प्रजया पशुभिः भवति महान् कीर्त्या, ब्रह्मवर्चसा विराजति ।

Cha. II-14.

He who meditates thus (in this manner) becomes radiant, is endowed with good appetite, reaches the

full length of life, lives gloriously, becomes great with offspring and cattle and great also with fame and shines with the holy effulgence born of sacred wisdom.

Note:

It may once more be stated here that a number of Upasanas mentioned in the first four chapters of Chandogya have no currency now. Some of these are Prana Vidya, Udgita Vidya, Omkaropasana of many sorts for various purposes, Madhu Vidya Gayatri Vidya, Sandilya Vidya, Kosa Vidya, Purusa Yajna Vidya, Aditya Vidya, Shodasa Vidya, Upakosala Vidya etc.

Upasana does not destroy Samsara

१६७. संहितादिविषयाणि, कर्मभिः अविरुद्धान्युपासनानि उक्तानि ।
अनन्तरं च अन्तेः सोपाधिकमात्मदर्शनमुक्तं स्वाराज्यफलम्
न चतावता अशेषतः संसारबीजस्य उपमर्दनमस्ति ।

Tai. 1-2-1.

Many Upasanas (meditations) which are not inconsistent with performance of rituals forming the subject matter of Samhita etc. have been described (up till now). After that, has been dealt with the meditation for the realisation of the Self with the attribute, viz. “that it is completely within.” The result of this is the attainment of the overlordship (of the world).

But even with the attainment of all these, the seed of Samsara (rebirths with joy and sorrow) has not been completely crushed (as not to sprout again).

Note:

This is a warning to us that the next higher step, viz. realisation of the Atman without any attributes and without any connection with any ritual has to be taken up. This step is stated in Sutra form as “It

is the Knower (and not the meditator) of Brahman that attains the highest." The second chapter of Taaittiriya is an explanation of this Sutra with which that chapter opens.

१६८. (ए) या गतिः ज्ञानाकर्मसमुच्चयानुष्ठानफलभूता सापि
नालं संसारदुःखोपशमनाय । Ai. 1-2-1.

(बी) सर्वमपि एतत् उपासनाकर्मफलं संसार एव ।

Br. 1-4-1.

(a) That state or course which is the result of combined practice of Karma and meditation (Upasana) is not sufficient or efficient to put a stop to the miseries of Samsara.

(b) The sum total of the results of all these meditations and Karmas (rites) fall within the relative world alone.

Note :

(a) Karmas do not lead to Moksha. So also, most of the lower Upasanas, where the attitude of mind is similar to that in Karma. In both of these, "ego" is not recognised as the great enemy within.

(b) The fruit of Upasana as that of Karma is only Bhoga or enjoyment, and not the attainment of realisation.

Nor is Upasana a Search for Reality

१६९. उपासनाविधिपरं हि वाक्यं न वस्तुतत्त्वप्रतिपादनपरम् ।

S. B. III-3-9.

The injunctions about Upasana do not concern themselves with the delineations of the principles of Truth.

Note :

This has to be specially remembered in trying to understand Upasanas. The mind has such a reverence for the Vedas that it thinks that everywhere it deals

with truth and nothing but Truth. This is not the case. One of the great achievements of Acharya Jaimini is his classification of sentences into two (1) Vidhi and (2) Vidishesha (injunctions and supplements to injunctions). Further, it is accepted by all the Acharyas that Vidhisheshas (or Arthavadas, the more commonly used name for the same) need not be taken at their face value. Only those which deal with Atindriya Vishaya (supersensuous truths) and which have a result have to be accepted in full and rightly understood. Arthavadas have no results; they are meant to eulogise the main sentence.

None of the founders of the six systems of thought (Shad Darsanas) have been fundamentalists like the Christians. The Bible says that the universe was created by God in six days. This statement is accepted as true as it occurs in the Bible. So, the theory of evolution which posits that the universe took millions of years to come to the present form was regarded as blasphemous as it goes against the statement in the Bible.

It would be better for the Hindu society also in the present day if the theory of Arthavadas unanimously accepted by our Acharayas is borne in mind. In Puranas, many of the Vedic Arthavadas have been expanded and developed poetically. Puranas are not ancient history. So, there is nothing abnormal or unusual if Upasanas do not deal with Truth. Vedas also provide means, which will confer enjoyments, for many do not hanker for Truth. Brahma Vidya which occurs in all the Upanishads deals with Truth, its nature and the means to attain it. See No. 158.

PART—TO NIVRITTI

Turn to Jnana

१७०. अतः अशेषोपद्रवबीजस्य अज्ञानस्य निवृत्त्यर्थं विधूतसर्वोपाधि-
विशेषात्मदर्शनार्थं आरभ्यते “ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परं” इत्यादि ॥
अस्मात् विज्ञानात् सर्वात्मब्रह्मविषयात् आत्यन्तिकः संसारो-
परमः प्रयोजनम् । निर्ज्ञातयोः हि संबन्धप्रयोजनयोः विद्या-
श्रवणग्रहणधारणाभ्यासार्थं प्रवर्तते । Tai 2-1-1.

Therefore, for the complete recovery from that ignorance (of the self) which is the seed of misery in life, does this (chapter) begin with the statement “That the knower of Brahman attains the supreme.” The benefit accruing from this Brahma Jnana is recovery from ignorance (of the self); from this results the absolute cessation of Samsara (rebirths etc.). One proceeds to hear, comprehend and remember and practise the Vidya (inculcated in the Upanishads) only when its connection (to life) and its benefits are well understood.

Note :

It is a fundamental proposition with Sankara, that only knowing the benefits of any course prompts man to resort to it. Fruits are there, high or low. But only with non-attachment to fruits does the spiritual life begin. Mimamsakas posit a category of Karmas without any result—the Nitya Karmas. Sankara affirms that all categories of Karmas have results. Only the knowledge of results prompts one to act.

१७१. विज्ञाते हि श्रेयः प्रतिबन्धकारणे तदपनयनाय यत्नः आरब्धुं
शक्यते नान्यथा । Ka. IV Intro.

Indeed only when the course of the obstacle to one's own good is well realised, it becomes possible to put forth effort for its removal, not otherwise.

Note :

A Sadhaka has to put forth effort to conquer and calm his mind etc. even after he ceases from doing rituals. Spiritual Sadhana does not mean passivity. One has to understand the real obstacle and conquer it. Desire is the obstacle and disturbs the mind.

१७२. व्यावृतं चक्षुः श्रोत्रादिकं इन्द्रियजातं अशेषविषयात् यस्य सः आवृत्तचक्षुः । स एव संस्कृतः । प्रत्यगात्मानं पश्यति । महता प्रयासेन स्वभावप्रवृत्तिनिरोधं कृत्वा प्रत्यगात्मानं पश्यति ।

Ka. 4-1.

He is to be called as the one with eyes inwards, whose eyes, ears and other senses have completely turned back from the objects. One who is thus purified realises the inner self. With great exertion and effort and having restrained the natural outward-going tendency, one sees the inner self.

Note :

So the most important thing for success in spiritual life is the drawing in of the senses. All one's efforts are to go for this achievement and not for the scrupulous observance of rituals which have a tendency to take the mind just the contrary way.

Rituals may cease and do cease when one turns to higher religion but not personal effort for self-control. Cessation of Karma does not mean passivity in spiritual life. Even effort ceases when conquest has been achieved i.e. in the highest state. Even then, there is spontaneous activity for the service of the world without involving any strain or sense of effort.

A different psychology for Jnana

१७३. पार्थगर्थमेव उपासनावाक्यानां ब्रह्मवाक्यानां च न्याय्यं, न एकः वाक्यत्वम् ।

S, B. III 2-21.

It is quite reasonable to conclude that different purposes are meant to be served by passages concerning devout meditation on the one hand and the passages concerning Brahman on the other. The two sets of passages do not constitute an integral or unified whole.

Note :

Mere Upasana requires concentration, but not loss of egoism. Brahma Jnana (realisation of self) requires not merely concentration but purity of mind and the death of ego. By Upasana, one attains Siddhis and prosperity: by Jnana, reality.

Introduction to 174:

Another definition of Dhyana is given below in 174(a) and how Jnana differs from it is stated in (b):

१७४.(ए) ध्यानं चिन्तनं यद्यपि मानसं तथापि पुरुषेण कर्तुं अकर्तुं अन्यथा वा कर्तुं शक्यं पुरुषतन्त्रत्वात् ।

यथा च:-“पुरुषो वा व गौतमाग्निः, योषा वा व गौतमाग्निः” इत्यत्र योषित्पुरुषयोः अग्निबुद्धिः मानसी भवति, केवल-चोदनाजन्यत्वात् क्रियैव सा, पुरुषतन्त्रा च । S.B. 1-1-4.

(बी) या तु प्रसिद्धे अग्नौ अग्निबुद्धिः, न सा चोदनातन्त्रा नापि पुरुषतन्त्र । किं तर्हि, प्रत्यक्षविषयवस्तुतन्त्रै वेति ज्ञानमेव तत् न क्रिया । एवं सर्वप्रमाणविषयवस्तुषु वेदितव्यम् ।

S.B. 1-1-4.

(a) Dhyana or concentration on a mental image, though a mental act, purely depends on the initiative of man. So, it can be done by man, can be neglected by man, or done by him in a wrong manner, for it purely depends on the activity of man. For instance, injunctions like “Gautama conceived man as fire.” Upasanas enjoin “Gautama conceived woman as fire.” In these the imagining of man or woman as fire is purely a mental act: this is born out of a Vedic

injunction. In fact, it is a Kriya as it is dependent on man (his activity).

(b) But, seeing the wellknown fire as fire is not born of a Vedic injunction nor is it dependent on imagination of man. But it depends on the natural function of the eye on an external object, the fire and its natural qualities. So there is “knowledge” here and not “Kriya”. Similarly in regard to every sense organ in relation to its respective object.

Note:

The great difference between knowledge and the process of meditation is brought out here. Seeing is a natural act. Seeing fire naturally as fire is an instance of knowledge which every creature has. But to imagine “a man as fire” is done because the Vedas have so ordered it. But for that Vedha Vidhi, man will not look on man as “fire”.

There is an Upanishadic Vidya known as “Pancha Agni Vidya”—imagining five things as fire. Two of these things to be imagined as fire are man and woman. This occurs in chapters 5-7-8 of Chandogya Upanishad.

१७५. (ए) कर्तृत्वादिसर्वसंसारधर्मनिराकरणे हि ब्रह्मणः आत्मत्वोपदेशः।

(बी) तदनिराकरणेन च उपासनाविधानम् । अतश्च उपासकस्य प्रतीकैः समत्वात् आत्मग्रहः नोपपद्यते । S. B. III 3-42.

(a) For the instruction that Brahman is the self depends on doing away with actorship and all other characteristics of the transmigratory existence.

(b) The injunction of meditation, on the other hand, depends on the non-removal of these characteristics.

Note:

This brings out clearly the purport of No. 173. The problem for the mind in each is different. The difference

pointed out here between Upasana and Jnana is very important.

१७६. कर्मगोचरात् साध्यसाधनलक्षणात् अनित्यात् विरक्तस्यैव
आत्मज्ञाने अधिकारः । Ka. 1-20.

Only those who are disgusted with the transitory things which result from Karma with its means and ends have competency to take up (the Sadhanas for) Atma Jnana.

Note :

This brings the meaning of No. 173 still clearer. In Upasana in spite of all concentration man is extrovert. In Jnana Nishta he becomes introvert. So in fact the two imply two opposite viewpoints. How can these have integral aim then ?

१७७.(ए) विद्या दैवं वित्तं, दैवतविषयं ज्ञानं कर्मसंबन्धित्वेन उपन्यस्तं
न परमात्मज्ञानम् । Ish-Intro.

(बी) विद्याशब्देन मुख्या परमात्मविद्यैव कस्मान्न गृह्यते ? अमृतत्वं
च परमात्मविद्यायाः कर्मणश्च विरोधात् समुच्चयानुपपत्तिः,
हेतुस्वरूपफलविरोधात् । विद्योत्पत्तौ तदाश्रये अविद्यानुपपत्तेः ।

(सी) अमृतमश्नुते इत्यापेक्षिकममृतम् । Ish. Conclusion.

(a) What is spoken of here as capable of combining with Karma (rituals) is Vidya which is meditation in connection with Devatas and not 'knowledge of the self'. For a different result is predicted here by the text "By meditation Devaloka—abode of God—is attained."

(b) "Why not assign to the term Vidya its chief (well known) sense "knowledge of Paramatman" and to Amritatvam also (its well known meaning) because of the opposition (mutually excluding outlook) that subsists between Paramatma Jnana and the performance of Karma? It is impossible for these to combine, for

they are opposed to each other in regard to their causes, nature and results. When Atma Jnana dawns in an individual, it is impossible for Avidya to co-exist (in the same individual).

(c) In the passage "Attains immortality" the reference is to "relative immortality".

Note to (a) :

Here the Sanskrit word 'Jnana' denotes "meditation". See Nos. 168 and 169.

Note to (c) :

The relative immortality is the attainment of Heaven or Brahmaloaka etc. The life in these is much longer than life on earth and more glorious, but it does entail rebirth.

१७८.(ए) रहस्यसामान्यात् मनोवृत्तिसामान्याच्च-यथा अद्वैतज्ञानं मनोवृत्तिमात्रं तथा अन्यान्युपासनानि मनोवृत्तिरूपाणि इत्यस्ति हि सामान्यम् ।

(बी) कस्तर्हि अद्वैतज्ञानस्य उपासनानां च विशेषः? उच्यते-स्वाभाविकस्य आत्मनि अक्रिये अध्यारोपितस्य कर्त्रादिकारक-क्रियाफलभेदविज्ञानस्य निवर्तकं अद्वैतविज्ञानम् ।

(सी) उपासनं तु यथाशास्त्रसमर्थितं किञ्चिदालम्बनमुपादाय तस्मिन् समानचित्तवृत्तिसंतानकरणं, तद्विलक्षणप्रत्ययानन्तरितं इति विशेषः ।

(डी) तान्येतान्युपासनानि सत्त्वशुद्धिकरत्वेन वस्तुतत्वावभासकत्वात् अद्वैतज्ञानोपकारकाणि, आलम्बनविषयत्वात् सुखसाध्यानि च ।

Chh. Intro.

(a) Along with the subject matter of meditation for the attainment of the Non-dual, are found mentioned certain other meditations which are meant to bring about prosperity; because they are similar in that both are matters beyond sense perception, also both are of the

nature of mentations. Just as realisation of non-duality is just a pure functioning of the mind, so also other meditations are functionings of the mind. Here is the similarity.

(b) What then is the difference between the meditations and the process of realisation of Non-duality? We explain that the self is by nature a non-actor, but on it is super-imposed the consciousness of various differences as of actor, action, its factors and its fruits etc. These super-impositions are removed by the realisation of the non-dual self.

(c) Whereas Upasana or meditation is the keeping up of a continuous flow of the same idea on a certain prop which has been prescribed by Sastra, the flow of the same idea is not broken in by any foreign idea. Such is the difference between the two.

(d) These meditations serving to purify one's mind and thereby illuminating the real nature of things are a help to the realisation of Non-duality. In as much as they are supported by props, they are easier to practise.

Note:

(b) points out a quality to be imported to meditation described in (c). For realisation of self, the meditation should destroy ego-sense.

१७९.(ए) “अभिध्यायते”: अयथाभूतमपि वस्तु कर्म भवति ।

मनोरथकल्पितस्यापि ‘अभिध्यायति’ कर्मत्वात् ।

(बी) ‘ईक्षतेस्तु’ तथाभूतमेव खलु वस्तु लोके कर्मदृष्टमित्यतः

परमात्मैवायं सम्यग्दर्शनविषयभूत “इक्षति” कर्मत्वेन
व्यपदिष्टः इति गम्यते । S. B. 1-3-13.

(a) Now for an act of “meditation”, and unreal thing also can be an object—even an object which is

a pure product of the imagination of one's mind can be an object of "meditation".

(b) But of the act of "seeing" real things only are the objects, as is the case with our (right) sense experience; so it is to be concluded that the highest (and only real) self is the object of "Samyag Darsana" (seeing well, right knowledge and complete intuition); the word "sees" denotes the experience of Reality.

Note:

The contrast brought out here has to be thoroughly understood. Jnana Nishta too has all the apparent features of meditation; but Jnana the real insight into Reality (an act similar to seeing a table in front, in our ordinary state) destroys all illusion cast on Jiva till now, just like light destroys the darkness of even millions of years. Here the distinction between Karma, Dhyana (Upasana) and Jnana may be stated in brief.

Karma, whether secular or religious, is born of the ignorance of the self when one does not know that real bliss is hidden in oneself, and hence is the desire for outside fruits; no question of search for truth, i.e. inside bliss, comes into play. Karma is purely dependent on man's actions with the aid of outside material things. It involves also the sense of actorship and desire for outside fruits.

Dhyana or Upasana is also born of ignorance and desire. The aim here is also not discovery of Truth but some enjoyment. But the means do not depend on any outside material but here one's own mind alone is used. The objective is won by powerful concentration. The sense of actorship continues.

Jnana occurring in Sastras or religions is a new insight, but not with the aid of our five senses and the

ordinary mind. The field of this insight transcends the mind and the senses अतीन्द्रियविषयः. The aid here as in Upasana is the concentrated mind, but mind here is devoid of any desire or attachment to worldly things. It is hankering to see Truth alone. It is panting for a correct knowledge or insight into Reality.

१८०.(ए) एकमपि ब्रह्म अपेक्षितोपाधिसम्बन्धं निरस्तोपाधिसम्बन्धं च उपास्यत्वेन ज्ञेयत्वेन च वेदान्तेषु उपदिश्यते ।

(बी) द्विरूपं हि ब्रह्मावगम्यते, नामरूपविकारभेदोपाधिशिविष्ट तद्विपरीतं च सर्वोपाधिविवर्जितम् ।

(सी) विद्याऽविद्याविषयभेदेन ब्रह्मणो द्विरूपता तत्र अविद्यावस्थायां ब्रह्मणः उपास्योपासकादिलक्षणः सर्वो व्यवहारः ।

S. B. 1-1-12.

(a) The Vedanta texts teach that even though there is one Brahman, He is described as if He is with limiting conditions as also that He is devoid of all such conditions. In the first instance, He is the object of meditation, in the second He is the object of (right) knowledge.

(b) Brahman is apprehended in two forms; in the first place as qualified by limiting conditions owing to the multiformity of the evolution of name and form (i.e. the multiformity of the created world); in the second place as being the opposite of this, i.e. free from all limiting conditions whatever.

(c) The double nature of Brahman ensues from the fact that He is the object of either "knowledge" or of ignorance. When He is the object of ignorance, the categories like Upasya (the object of meditation) and the Upasaka (one who meditates) and all such others ensue.

१८१. फलनिरपेक्षज्ञानकर्मसमुच्चयानुष्ठानात् कृतात्मसंस्कारस्य उच्छि-
न्नात्मज्ञानप्रतिबन्धकस्य आत्मस्वरूपतत्त्वविज्ञानाय केनमारभ्यते ।

Ke. V Intro.

The Kena (Upanishad) is begun for giving the clearest idea about the nature and truth of Atman for such as those whose minds have been purified by conjoint practice of Karmas and Upasanas without attachment to fruits and thus whose obstacles for the realisation of Truth have been cleared.

Note:

Here also the word Jnana is used in the sense of Upasana, as in No. 177. Here is also the suggestion that many of the Upasanas have only the same psychology of Karma and so can well unite with Karma, but the highest Upasana which is meant for the realisation of Self cannot go with Karma. Another point to be noted here is that Nishkama Karmas and Upasanas alike lose their nature of Pravritti and attain the nature of Nivritti and thus become conducive to self-knowledge.

१८२. आत्मज्ञानं तु विज्ञानानपेक्षम् । कस्मात् ? विज्ञानस्वरूपतत्वात् ।

Ke V Intro.

Self-realisation does not depend on any kind of consciousness. Its nature itself is consciousness of awareness.

Note:

Consciousness is a function of the mind and its expression is knowledge. But in self-realisation one has gone beyond the mind. Yet there is awareness. So is Atman Chit, i.e. the nature of Atman is consciousness (in addition to existence and bliss.)

The knowledge gained by the mind is, so to say, a percolation of the awareness of Atman through the mind.

Process of Knowledge

१८३. आत्मज्ञानेन किं अमृतत्वं उत्पाद्यते ? न,
किं तर्हि ? स्वेनैव नित्यात्मस्वभावेन अमृतत्वं विन्दते,
न आलम्बनपूर्वकम् । यदि हि, विद्योत्पाद्यं अमृतत्वं
स्यात् अनित्यं भवेत् कर्मकार्यवत् । विद्या अनात्मविज्ञानं
निवर्तयति । Ke-2-4.

Is immortality “produced” by self-knowledge? No. How does it come then? Immortality is attained because of the eternal nature of the Self. It is not produced by any other support (means). If immortality is the product of Vidya, it will be non-eternal just like the result of a ritual or activity. Vidya removes the identification with non-self.

Note:

The analogy of the cataract of the eye in the section “Para and Aparā Vidya” of the Introduction to this chapter will make the purport clearer.

Doing of Yajnas (sacrifices here) brings about residence in Heaven after death. Yajnas thus confer an unseen result. Similar is not the result of Jnana, even with the difference that its result occurs in this life and not after death. It is like seeing a lost coin when the torch light is flashed there. The coin was there and was not produced by the flash light. Only it was not seen in darkness. Atman too is ever-existing. Cataract is like the darkness. Jnana is like flash light inherent in oneself. This flash light latent till now, becomes patent by proper meditation.

१८४. अविद्याकृतानात्मापोहार्थत्वात् । या हि ब्रह्मविषया स्वात्म-
प्राप्तिरूपदिश्यते, सा अविद्याकृतस्य अन्नादिविशेषात्मनः
आत्मत्वेन अध्यारोपितस्य अनात्मनः अपोहार्थम् ।

Tai II 6-5.

The purpose of Atma Jnana is the removal of the non-self created by Avidya (ignorance of self). The attainment of Self by Brahma Vidya which has been taught, is but the removal of the non-self created by Avidya by the superimposition of the physical body etc. as the self.

It is a matter within our ken that knowledge removes ignorance.

Note:

Note to 183 may be useful here also.

Caution in Jnana Nishta

१८५. न तत्त्वमसि वाक्यार्थात् प्रच्याव्य आवृत्तौ प्रवर्तयेत् ।

“नियुक्तस्य च, अस्मिन् अधिकृतः अहं कर्ता मयेदं कर्तव्यं इति, अवर्यं बाह्यप्रत्ययात् विपरीतप्रत्ययः उत्पद्यते ।

यस्तु स्वयमेव मन्दमतिः अप्रतिमानात् तं वाक्यार्थं जिहासेत्

तस्य एतस्मिन्नेव वाक्यार्थे स्थिरीकारः आवृत्त्यादिवाचोयुक्त्या

अभ्युपेयते । S. B. IV 1-2.

One must not be moved towards repetition of the mantras in such a way as to make him lose the true sense of the sentence “Thou art That.” If in this repetition ideas arise “that I have been enjoined to do this, I have competency to do it, I am the agent of this act, and I have a duty to do this,” then there inevitably arise notions opposed to (right) notions of Brahman.

But if one naturally slow minded is about to lose from his mind the purport of this sentence, because it does not reveal itself to him, it is natural to fortify him in the understanding of the sense of that sentence, by the means of repetition of it, etc.

Note:

The attitude of mind in Karma and Jnana are entirely different—see Nos. 173 and 179. Jnana Nishta-begins with

the denial of the ego and its accompaniment, actorship and desire for result. When the assumption of this attitude is difficult, the meditation and repetition of the formula "Tat Twam Asi" brings about this attitude of non-actorship etc. gradually. This is the rationale for repetition of the mantras in Jnana Nishta

The Result of Jnana

१८६. सद्यो मुक्तिकारणं आत्मज्ञानम् । S. B. 1-1-12. Intro.

Knowledge of the Self (self-realisation) leads to instantaneous realisation (here and now).

Note:

There is 'only one' result for true Jnana. That is self-realisation. Upasanas have various results.

१८७. ज्ञानात् मोक्ष इति च सर्वोपनिषदां सिद्धान्तः । Chh. 2-23.

The established proposition of all Upanishads is that final release results from knowledge.

Note:

Sankara goes so far as to say that this is the only teaching of all Upanishads. Other matters found therein are by the way.

१८८.(ए) ज्ञानस्य हि एष । परा निष्ठा यदात्मैकत्वविज्ञानम् ।

Ka. 2-8.

(बी) सगुणासु विद्यासु गतिरर्थवती, न निर्गुणायां परमात्मविद्यायाम् ।

(a) The realisation that there is but one self is the supreme aim of discipline of Jnana (knowledge);

(b) Going (to Heaven etc.) happens as a result of Saguna meditation. But this going etc. can never be associated with the results of Nirguna Vidya (meditation of the attributes Atman).

Note:

We hear of rebirths and going to higher worlds etc. Meditation as such cannot end this Samsara or going to

the Lokas. But when a man realises by Jnana he does not go anywhere because he has nowhere to go. He has become all,

So when results are mentioned to Upasanas, as going to higher Lokas, the Upasana is Sagunopasana, the lower Upasana.

१८९.(ए) यत्र हि निरस्तसर्वविशेषसम्बन्धनपरं ब्रह्मात्मत्वेन उपदिश्यते तत्र एकरूपमेव फलं मोक्षः ।

(बी) यत्र तु गुणविशेषसम्बन्धं प्रतीकविशेषसम्बन्धं वा ब्रह्मोपदिश्यते तत्र संसारगोचराग्येव उच्चावचानि फलानि दृश्यन्ते ।

S. B. 1-1-24.

(a) Whenever the highest Brahman, free from all connections with distinguishing attributes is represented as one's own self, there is only one result, viz. the final release.

(b) But wherever Brahman is taught as connected with distinguishing attributes or outward symbols, the rewards are mentioned to be within Samsara (leading to rebirth etc.) whether these be of a very high or low order,

१९०. प्रत्यक्षफलत्वात् ज्ञानस्य फलविरहशङ्कानुपपत्तिः । कर्मफले हि स्वर्गादावनुभावानारूढे स्यादाशङ्का भवेद्वा नवेति । अनुभावारूढं तु ज्ञानफलम् ।

S. B. III 3-32.

Since the result of knowledge (self-realisation) is immediate (to be experienced here and now like sense perception) there is no reason to fear as to getting the result at all. Indeed in the case of results of Karma (rituals) like attainment of heaven etc. which do not come within one's experience, there is reason for doubt whether they will ensue or not. But the result of "knowledge" is within the ken of experience.

Note :

Result of Jnana is certain as it can be experienced in this life. Thus it is different from the rewards of Karma to be attained in heaven after death. So why not take up the sure step instead of the doubtful one.

१९१. प्राणादिविज्ञानं केवलं कर्मसमुच्चितं वा सकामस्य प्राणात्म-
प्राप्त्यथमेव भवति ।

Ken Intro. Ke. V.

The meditation on Prana (Hiranyagarbha) alone or in combination with rituals and when actuated by desire for results, leads only to the identification of the devotee with Prana.

Note :

For two reasons which are interconnected, the Sadhaka does not attain self-realisation. First he hankers not for Truth but for enjoyment, and secondly as such his conception of God is necessarily lower. Such a meditation can well go along with Karma.

Here “Vijnana” like Jnana (No. 158) means “meditation”.

This saying is put here once more to bring out the contrast between the lower and higher meditation.

१९२.(ए) सगुणासु तावद्विद्यासु वाक्यविशेषे ऐश्वर्यप्राप्तिः पापनिवृत्तिश्च
विद्यावतः उच्यते ।

(बी) निर्गुणायां तु विद्यायां अकर्त्रात्मत्वबोधात् कर्मप्रदाहसिद्धिः ।
पूर्वसिद्धकर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वविपरीतं हि त्रिष्वपि कालेषु अकर्तृत्वा-
भोक्तृत्व स्वरूपं “ब्रह्मामहमस्मि” न इतः पूर्वमपि कर्ता भोक्ता
वा अहमस्मि न इदानीं नापि भविष्यत्काले इति ब्रह्मवित्
अवगच्छति ।

(सी) एवमेव च मोक्ष उपपद्यते ।

(डी) न च देशकालनिमित्तापेक्षः मोक्षः कर्मफलवत् भवितुं अर्हति ।

(इ) अन्यथा हि अनादिकालप्रवृत्तानां कर्मणां क्षयभावे मोक्षाभावः स्यात् ।

(एफ) परोक्षत्वानुपपत्तेश्च ज्ञानफलस्य ।

S. B. IV 1-13.

(a) In the case of meditation on the qualified Brahman, the corresponding complementary passages declare that those who do such meditations obtain lordly power and cessation of all sin.

(b) But in the case of Vidyas referring to Brahman devoid of qualities, the destruction of all work follows from the cognition that our true self is not an agent, just contrary to past ideas of actor and enjoyer. There arises the awareness that "I am Brahman" and my nature is not either that of doer or enjoyer in all the three times (past, present or future). The knower of Brahman experiences that he was never an actor or enjoyer in past, nor is he one now nor shall be one in the future.

(c) It is but appropriate that Moksha (release) should be as thus described.

(d) Otherwise if the chain of works which have been running on from eternity could not be cut short, release could never take place.

(e) Nor can final release be dependent on place, time or special cause, as the fruit of works (rituals) is.

(f) The fruit of knowledge (Moksha) cannot rightly therefore be one beyond our present experience.

१९३. प्रकाशे इव घटादिः, विद्यायां सत्यां आविर्भवति ।

तस्मादन्यत्यागेन आत्मप्रार्थनैव आत्मलाभसाधनम् ॥

Mu. 6-3.

Just as pots etc. manifest themselves in the presence of light, on the dawn of Vidya (Atma) manifests its own nature. Therefore the intense wish for the realisation of the Atman, after renouncing all others, is alone the means for the attainment of the Atman.

CHAPTER IV

JNANA NISHTA, YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

Sankara calls this also by the name Para Vidya or Atma Vidya. The word Vidya used in this connection tells us that this is but a higher evolution of the Upasana. Here the object of concentration is Brahman or Atman or Truth and not any other imagery enjoined by the Vedic texts to be conceived by us for a particular meditation, for example, the Sacrificial Horse described at the opening of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. It may once more be stated that the objectives of the two are far different. In Jnana Nishta the search is for absolute Truth and nothing else. In Upasana the aim is a status in some higher world or more subtle prosperity lasting for a much longer period than the ones conferred by Karma.

Brahma Vidya or Jnana Yoga is not the result accruing from the study of the chief religious books. A deep mastery of these books or a great proficiency to expound them is nothing in this context; nor is it clarity of thinking and extreme dexterity in reasoning about the intricate points of Vedanta. Yet the study of these books or hearing of the exposition of their vital points from the mouth of a realised guru, teacher, is an essential preliminary.

Steps in Jnana Nishta

The greatest obstacle to Jnana Nishta is the deep attachment to rituals and their results. The rituals, as they have been propounded by the Vedas, have

cast a deadly spell on man. That the rituals are causes of bondage is not easily seen or conceded. The heavenly prosperity or other benefits they may confer are but ephemeral; but this is not understood. Only the hearing of the glorious truth of Atman or Brahman and the conviction born as a consequence, has the power to cast off their deadly spell. This hearing is called Sravana and forms the first step.

Manana, consideration of the pros and cons till a conviction is born, is the next step. This conviction is a plant of slow growth. The Vasanas (impressions) imbedded in man's mind by his Kama (desire), Krodha (anger) and their brood, are enemies to the birth of this conviction. They have to be conquered. This can be done by conscious and persistent effort to cultivate ethical excellences and qualities which counteract the vices of the mind or the Vasanas. Nishkamata, absence of desire, Akrodha, the cultivation of the absence of anger by restraining it whenever it arises etc., have to be cultivated.

Karma Yoga has its place here, when actions, rituals and others are done without attachment to the fruits and the very Kama (desire) which promoted this action is restrained and sublimated. The mind is thereby purified. Now the purified mind will understand the spiritual truths all the better and become ready to strive towards the realisation of Atman.

Ethics

Now the other steps prescribed in the Gita for becoming a Sthitaprajna, the steadfast in knowledge, for becoming Gunatita (one who has transcended Satwa, Rajas and Thamo Gunas) and for becoming a Bhakta,

have all to be practised. These are given in Chapter II, Nos. 55 to 71, Chapter XIV, Nos. 22 to 26, and Chapter XII, Nos. 13 to 20 of the Gita respectively. Also the Jnana Sadhanas mentioned in Chapter XIII, Nos. 6 to 11, of the Gita deserve due attention here. Sankara says that cultivation of these alone brings about Jnanaparipaka, the ripening of knowledge, i.e. of moral excellence.

The Upanishads teach about the futility of Karma, and advocate the importance of ethical qualities. But the Gita is emphatic in denouncing mere rituals, (Chapter II, Nos. 42-46, and Chapter IX, Nos. 20-21), and as pointed out above strongly advocates the supreme necessity for developing Atma Gunas. But if Sankara is merciless in his exposure of the hollowness of rituals, he is equally ardent about perfecting ethical qualities. It is very doubtful whether any other teacher in the world has been so emphatic in discarding rituals and advocating the supreme importance of ethics as the fundamental basis of spiritual life.

Higher Meditation

But the final step has yet to be taken. The Vidya (meditation) side of Brahma Vidya has to play its part. None of the above steps can become firm until by concentration on Atman or God, the veil is broken by the bursting of the illumination of Truth. Sankara defines Jnananishta as “प्रत्यगात्मविषयप्रत्यय-सन्तानकरणाभिनिवेशश्च ज्ञाननिष्ठा” the passionate longing to have continuous flow of thought or idea regarding the inner self.” This continuous unbroken flow of idea constitutes Nididhyasa or Vidya. This alone rends the veil, when Atman or God or Truth shines in its

innate glory and brilliance, the darkness of ignorance with its brood of Vasanas being destroyed. When Vasanas are scorched, Kama and Krodha can no more sprout. The man shines in his inherent glory as Satchitananda. His ego is dissolved; his individuality has vanished. He has become all. This Sarvatmabhava, the Atma becoming identical with all, is the consummation of Jnananishta.

It may be asked, has not Sankara altogether dispensed with the great importance of Bhakti? It has been already pointed out that Sankara showed by his life itself that he was not an advocate of quietism or passivity. The various Stotras that he has left behind are equally an eloquent witness of his deep Bhakti. But what is more, while giving his beautiful, lucid and direct exposition of Jnananishta in Gita XVIII-55 (commentary) he states ज्ञाननिष्ठा परा भक्तिरित्युच्यते "Jnananishta is itself the highest form of Bhakti." For, is there not in Jnananishta also that passionate longing for and concentration on Atman? Jnananishta is not a cold, heartless process, as many may think. It is the extremely concentrated passion for Atman. Sankara says elsewhere that Bhakti to personal god, when it fully ripens, will lead to impersonal God. Brahmatma Bhava and Sarvatma Bhava. To Sankara, as he expressly says Jnananishta and Bhakti are one in essence ultimately.

Reality of the World

Introduction:

There is an oft repeated Vedantic saying "Jagat is Mithya" (the world is unreal). This is one of the

most misunderstood ideas of Vedanta. Saying Nos. 194 to 197 are Sankara's assertions to the contrary, viz. that world is real. As long as the body is real to us so long the world also is real to us. World is an obstinate fact before realisation of the Atman or Brahman.

The great mistake made is, that the statement is taken to mean that the world alone is unreal, while we unconsciously feel that our body and senses are real. That, this is a wrong idea, is emphatically asserted by Sankara.

In deep sleep the world does not exist for the sleeper. Even if he had excruciating pain before sleep, it does not exist for him in his deep sleep. When he regains his [body sense, the pain reappears. Body reality and world reality go and come together. The same applies with greater force in the case of super-conscious state. But after the stabilisation of superconscious experience, there is identity with all. So the old world of multiplicity and difference is gone for good.

Even when the sages come down to lower level, this new experience of unity of all in the universe does not desert them. This is the difference between sleep and Sahaja Samadhi. As a matter of fact, world to them is God and no more the grim old world. It is this new and everlasting experience that makes them state "Jagat is Mithya"—the world is unreal. For a man in Avidya, world is certainly real, but not so for a man in Vidya. Read in the light of these explanations, saying Nos. 194, 195, 196, and 197 will become clear.

The charge against the "Maya Vada" of Vedantins like Sankara arises out of the misunderstanding dealt with above.

१९४. सर्वव्यवहाराणामेव प्राक् ब्रह्मात्मविज्ञानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः,
स्वप्नव्यवहारस्य प्राक् प्रबोधात् ।

S. B. II-1-14.

Before coming by realisation it is but proper to regard all (our worldly activities) as real as our activities in dream seem real to us, till we wake up.

१९५. न च द्वैतस्य अनृतत्वबुद्धिः प्रथममेव कस्यचित्स्यात् ।

Br. V-1-1. Intr.

Nobody thinks from the very outset that duality is false.

१९६. प्राक् ब्रह्मात्मत्वदर्शनात् विषयादिप्रपञ्चो व्यवस्यितरूपो भवति ।

Prior to the realisation of the identity of Atman with Brahman, the world of senses and other things have their definite form.

१९७. देहात्मप्रत्ययो यद्वत् प्रमाणत्वेन कल्पितः लौकिकं तद्वदेवेदं
प्रमाणं त्वात्मनिश्चयात् ।

S. B. 1-4.

As long as the idea of the self is identified with body consciousness so long i.e., till the realisation of (the true nature of) Atman, the world perception, the reality of the world, is also equally valid.

Avidya and Karma

१९८. देहादिसंघाते आत्माभिमानो अविद्यात्मकः ।

G. 18-66.

The identifying of the self with the aggregate of the body, etc. is the core of Avidya or ignorance.

१९९. भ्रान्तिप्रत्ययनिमित्त एवायं संसारभ्रमो नतु परमार्थः (सम्यक् दर्शनात् अत्यन्तमेव उपरमः ।)

G. XIII-2.

The illusion of Samsara is due solely to an illusory notion and is not an absolute reality (Right knowledge brings about absolute cessation of Samsara).

२००. फलार्थित्वात् अविद्वान् प्रवर्तते ।

G. 13-2.

The ignorant man, longing for results, engages in action.

Note:

This applies even to the performer of Vedic Nitya Karma and ordinary Varnashrama Dharma or Karmas of Smritis—(codes of conduct)—for the Varnas (Brahmins, Kshatriyas. etc.,

२०१. यः पुनः कर्ताहमिति वेत्यात्मानं तस्य ममेदं कर्तव्यं, इत्यवश्यं-
भाविनि बुद्धिः स्यात्, तदपेक्षया सोऽधिक्रियते इति तं प्रति
कर्माणि संभवन्ति स च अविद्वान् ।

G. II-21.

In the case of him who thinks he is the doer of actions, there will necessarily arise the idea that he has this thing to do. Because of such an idea he becomes qualified for actions and on him are actions enjoined.

Note:

The implications of the term “Avidya” as used in Vedanta is well brought out here. See No. 86.

२०२. यानि कर्माणि शास्त्रेण विधीयन्ते तान्यपि अविदुषो विहितानि ।

G. II-21.

The Karmas (rituals) which are enjoined by the Scriptures are intended for the unenlightened.

Note:

There is a common idea that since a Karma has been sanctioned and approved by Sastra, it cannot cause bondage. This statement roots out this wrong idea. The bondage caused by Vedic Karmas may be weaker. These yet give golden fetters.

२०३. आत्मविदो निवृत्तमिथ्याज्ञानत्वात्, विपर्ययज्ञानमूलस्य कर्म-
योगस्य असंभवः स्यात् ।

G. 5-Intr.

For a man of self-realisation, because he is free from illusory knowledge, Karmayoga, based on illusion must be impossible.

Note :

The reference here is to a Siddha and not to a Sadhaka.

२०४. किमर्थं तर्हि भक्तैः पूजादिलक्षणं, यागदानहोमादिकं च सुकृतं
प्रयुज्यते इत्याह अज्ञानेनावृतं विवेकज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति करोमि
इत्येवं मोहं गच्छन्ति अविवेकिनः ।

G. V-15.

With what object are meritorious rituals like worship, sacrifice, gifts and offerings of oblations to fire etc. performed? Because discriminative knowledge is enveloped by ignorance. Thereby the ignorant mortal creatures in Samsara are deluded and think "I act, I cause to act, I shall enjoy, I cause to enjoy" and so on.

Note:

Even praiseworthy acts like worship etc. cause bondage if done with desire, as is usually the case. The warning given in this and No. 205 has to be well kept in mind and non-attachment cultivated.

२०५. भगवत्कर्मकारिणो ये युक्ततमा अपि, कर्मि णो अज्ञाः, उदारा-
स्त्रयोप्यज्ञाः ।

G. 18-66.

Men performing rituals to God, in spite of their great devotion, are but ritualists and unenlightened. The 3 sorts of Bhaktas even though noble indeed are unenlightened yet.

Nitya Karma

२०६. यावत् ध्यानावरोहणासमर्थः तावत् गृहस्थेन अधिकृतेन कर्तव्यं
कर्म ।

G. 6-Intr.

As long as he is unable to ascend Dhyana Yoga (Yoga of meditation) the house-holder on whom actions (rituals) are enjoined should perform them.

२०७. नित्यस्य च कर्मणो, वेदप्रमाणावबुद्धत्वात् फलेन भवितव्यं
अन्यथा वेदस्य आनर्थक्यप्रसंगः ।

The Nitya Karma (life-long acts) taught on the authority of the Vedas must produce a result of its own. Else the Vedas would be deemed purposeless.

२०८. न, नित्यानां कर्मणां अभावादेव भावरूपस्य प्रत्यवायस्य उत्पत्तिः
कल्पयितुं शक्या युक्ता च ।

G. III-Intr.

It is indeed, impossible nay unreasonable to imagine the generation of sin—which is a Bhava or positive effect—out of the omission of life-long rites or duties which is an Abhava or mere negation.

Note:

See Introduction to Chapter II section “Jaimini’s prescription for Moksha”, as also note to No. 103.

Antithesis between Karma and Jnana

२०९. अविद्याकृतत्वात् बन्धस्य विद्यया मोक्ष उपपद्यते ।

S. B. III-2-4.

As ignorance (of self) causes bondage, so it is quite appropriate the realisation or knowledge (of self) should lead to freedom.

२१०. विद्यायां हि सत्यां उदिते सवितरि शार्वरमिव तमः प्रणाशमुप-
गच्छत्यविद्या ।

G. II-69.

On realisation (of the self) ignorance (Avidya) disappears, as at sunrise the darkness of night vanishes.

२११. ज्ञानकर्मणोः कर्तृत्वाकर्तृत्वबुद्ध्याश्रययोः युगपत् एकपुरुषा-
श्रयत्वासंभवः ।

G. II-11-Intr.

It is impossible for Jnana and Karma to co-exist simultaneously in one and the same person, the one being based on the idea of non-agency and unity and the other on the idea of agency and diversity (multiplicity).

२१२. न लोकस्य मुमुक्षुत्वं फलार्थित्वं च युगपत्संभवति ।

G. IV-II.

One cannot indeed pursue results and at the same time seek for freedom, Moksha.

Note :

The running after a result causes man to act, to do Karma. “Seeking for freedom” takes the form

of outward passivity or abandonment of Karma. Karma and non-Karma cannot thus exist in the same state of mind.

२१३. एकस्य पुरुषस्य ज्ञानकर्मणोः विरोधात् युगपदनुष्ठानं न संभवति ।

G. III Intr.

The same person cannot take to the practice of Jnana and Karma (meditation on self and rituals) as the two are mutually opposite.

२१४. ज्ञानकर्मनिष्ठयोः परस्परविरोधात् एकपुरुषेण युगपदनुष्ठानं अशक्यम् ।

G. 3-4 Intr.

The steadfast practice of Jnana and Karma cannot go simultaneously in the same person as they (the mind in their practice) run in opposite directions (one inwards and the other outwards).

२१५. धर्मोपि मुमुक्षोः किल्बिषमेव, बंधापादकत्वात् ।

G. 4-21.

Even Dharma (righteous act) is injurious or harmful to a seeker of liberation as it causes bondage.

Note:

See No. 154 and note on it.

२१६. कर्मयोगिनो अक्षरोपासनानुपपत्तिं दर्शयति भगवान् ।

G. 12-13 Intr.

The Lord shows that Akshara Upasana (the meditation in which there is no distinction between the Lord and the self) is not appropriate for a Karma Yogi.

Note:

Gita XII—16 speaks of सर्वारम्भपरित्यागः (the abandonment of all acts). In Karma Yoga there is

performance of acts but with non-attachment. One has to rise above Karma Yoga also, i.e. have no Karma at all.

२१७. न ज्ञाननिष्ठा कर्मसहितोपपद्यते।

G. XIII-66.

The steadfast practice of Jnana does not fit in with Karma.

Note :

In a Jnani the sense of actorship is gone. So how can he act?

२१८. ज्ञाननिष्ठा कर्मणा सहभावित्वेन विरुध्यते पर्वतसर्षपयोरिवान्तर-
वान् विरोधः ।

G. 18-55.

The steadfast practice of Jnana cannot co-exist with Karma being contrariwise. The difference between them is as between a mountain and a mustard.

Note :

This statement has to be grasped and well-remembered. The psychological attitude in Karma and Jnana are exactly opposite—one goes outwards to senses, the other goes inwards to Atman within. One is intent on trivial results, the other on attaining God or Self conferring eternal bliss. So is not this difference as vast as the one between a mustard and a mountain?

२१९. बाह्यप्रत्यगात्मप्रवृत्तेः विरोधात् ।

B- 1-6-1.

The two tendencies, one going outwards and the other devoting itself to the inner self, are contrariwise.

Note:

Explains No. 168.

What to do?

२२०. महति शोकसागरे निमग्नस्य अर्जुनस्य अन्यत्र आत्मज्ञानात्
उद्धारणं अपश्यन् भगवान् वासुदेवः ।

G. II-11 Intr.

The Lord Vasudeva found no other means than Self-Knowledge for the deliverance of Arjuna plunged in the mighty ocean of grief.

Note :

Only on hearing of the great benefit to accrue from Atma Jnana does one's inclination turn towards Atman. This is the first step. So the Gita in Chapter II begins with a statement regarding the true nature of Atman.

२२१. कर्मबीजोऽविद्याक्षेत्रोह्यसौ संसारवृक्षः समूलमुद्धर्तव्यः तदुद्धारणेन
हि पुरुषार्थसमाप्तिः ।

B. 1-4.

This tree of the relative existence has one's own action for its seed and ignorance as its field for its growth. It has to be pulled out with its roots. For in the uprooting of it lies perfection of human achievement.

Note :

This states what is to be rejected, as No. 220 stated what is to be accepted.

२२७. निगडे हि निर्ज्ञाते, निगडितस्य मोक्षाय यत्नः कर्तव्यो भवति ।

Br. II 1-Intr.

Only when the fetters are known, can the fettered man try to get rid of them.

२२३. सर्वेषां हि ब्रह्मविद्या पुरुषार्थाय उपदिश्यते ।

Br. III 2-3.

Indeed realisation of Brahman has been taught as the means to the highest end of life for all (as within the reach of all).

२२४. ससाधनं कर्म संन्यस्य, शरीरयात्रामात्रचेष्टो यतिः, ज्ञाननिष्ठो मुच्यते ।

G. 4-21. Intr.

That Yati (man of self-control) who renounces all actions with their accessories except what is necessary for the bare bodily existence, steady in his devotion to knowledge, gets liberated.

Sthita-Prajna: The beacon Light

२२५. बाह्यलाभनिरपेक्षः परमार्थदर्शनामृतरसलाभेन अन्यस्मादलं प्रत्ययवान् स्थितप्रज्ञः ।

G. II. 55.

One without longing to external possessions, averse to every thing else because of his acquisition of the immortal nectar, (his realisation of Supreme Truth) such a one is the steadfast in Knowledge.

२२६. सर्वत्र एव हि अध्यात्मशास्त्रे यान्येव कृतार्थलक्षणानि, तान्येव साधनान्युपदिश्यन्ते यत्नसाध्यत्वात् ।

G. II-55.

For everywhere in spiritual science the very characteristic attributes of the successful Yogin are instructed as a means for attaining that stage.

Note:

A very great aid to Jnana Nishta is described here. The great qualities of a Jnani did not descend on him one fine morning. The Jnani, earlier as a

Sadhaka did strive with infinite perseverance and effort, to cultivate them. He was conscious at each step of his fall or rise. He consciously strove for them till they gradually grew in him and got established. Then he became the Jnani.

The great qualities of a Sthita Prajna are mentioned in the Sastras as a help to others, to induce them to strive for their attainment. The Sastra is meant for the Sadhaka and not for the Siddha. Ethical excellences get established in a man, only by taking up and patiently and perseveringly cultivating them. The mere statement of them is thus an instruction to practise them. Sthita Prajnas are models set before us, for us to emulate them.

२२७. यानि यत्नसाध्यानि साधनानि, लक्षणानि च भवन्ति तानि ।

G. II-55.

The means, which by effort lead to the end, later become the attributes (of the Yogin).

२२८. यावत् यत्नसाध्यं तावत् संन्यासिनः अनुष्ठेयं गुणातीतत्व-
साधनं मुमुक्षोः स्थिरीभूतं तु स्वसंवेद्यं सत् गुणातीतस्य यतेः
लक्षणं भवति ।

G. 14-26. Intr.

These which can be achieved by effort are to be practised by the Sannyasin. The seeker of Moksha should adopt these as the means to transcend the Gunas. When these become firmly established in him, they become the attributes of the Gunatita.

Ethics essential

२२९. आत्मज्ञानं ससंन्यासं अमृतत्वसाधनम् ।

Br. III 5-1. Intr.

Self-knowledge together with renunciation is the means to immortality.

Note:

Renunciation here is of desires and their means, the Karmas also.

२३०. इन्द्रियाणां हि विषयसेवातृष्णातो निवृत्तिः या तत् सुखं न विषयविषया तृष्णा, दुःखमेव हि सा । न तृष्णायां सत्यां सुखस्य गंधमात्रमपि उपपद्यते ।

G. II-66.

Verily, happiness consists in the freedom of senses from thirst for sensual enjoyment, not in the thirst for objects. This last is misery indeed. While there is thirst (for enjoyment) there can be no trace of happiness; we cannot so much as smell it.

Note :

This has to be well borne in mind to incline one to renunciation.

२३१. परं निःश्रेयसं सर्वकर्मसंन्यासपूर्वकात् आत्मज्ञाननिष्ठारूपात् धर्मात् भवति ।

G. General-Intro.

Supreme Bliss accrues from that Dharma which consists in steady devotion to the realisation of the self, preceded by renunciation of all works.

Note :

Atma-jnana-nishta is the one supreme Sadhana in man's life for his eternal good. All others are at best preliminary disciplines to be superseded with this growth.

२३२. शास्त्राचार्योपदेशशमदमादिसंस्कृतं मनः आत्मदर्शने कारणम् ।

G. II-21.

The mind refined by the control of the body, the senses and the lower mind and equipped with the teachings of the Scripture and the teacher constitutes the cause by which the self can be seen in truth.

Note:

Sama and Dama, (the internal and external control of the mind), are the greatest purifiers of the mind, not Nitya Karma, charity, etc. A purified mind is the instrument for realisation, not the sense-bound mind.

२३३. गीताशास्त्र आत्मज्ञानवतः संन्यासे एव अधिकारः न कर्मणि ।

The Gita Sastra teaches that he who has acquired a knowledge of the self should resort to renunciation only, not to works.

२३४. नासति समदर्शने रसस्योच्छेदः तस्मात् सम्यग्दर्शनात्मिकायाः स्थैर्यं कर्तव्यम् ।

G. I-59.

In the absence of right realisation (of self) there can be no annihilation of the taste for sense objects. So a steadfast attitude of mind should be cultivated which has for its core the zeal for right realisation.

Note:

Only right realisation destroys Samskaras,

२३५. आदौ इन्द्रियाणि स्ववशे स्थापयितव्यानि ।

G. II-60 Intr.

Even from the beginning the senses should be brought under control.

२३६. अक्षरोपासकानां सम्यग्दर्शननिष्ठानां “अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां” इत्यादिचर्मपूगः साक्षादमृतत्वकारणम् ।

G. 12-13 Intr.

For the worshippers of the Akshara, for those whose one supreme endeavour is for the right realisation, the direct means of immortality taught in the bunch of Dharmas like "absence of hatred of all beings etc." are prescribed (These are given in verse Nos. 13 to 20 of Chapter XII-Gita.)

१३७. विदुषः अविक्रियात्मदर्शिनः फलार्थित्वाभावात् प्रवृत्त्यनुपपत्तौ कार्यकरणसंघातव्यापारोपरमे निवृत्तिरूपचर्यते ।

G. XIII-2.

The wise man, seeing the immutable Self, cherishes no longing for results and does not therefore engage in action; when as a consequence, the activity, of the aggregate of the body and the senses ceases, we say figuratively, that he abstains from action.

Personal effort (Purushakara)

for self-control necessary and not rituals.

२३८. ज्ञाते हि अनर्थमूले तदुच्छेदाय यत्नं कुर्यात् ।

G. III-36 Intr.

When the exact source of the evil is known, one must exert himself to exterminate it.

२३९. पुरुषकारस्य विषयानुपपत्तेः शास्त्रानर्थक्यम् ।

G. III-34 Intr.

If there is no scope for personal exertion (Purushakara) then the Sastra (Scriptures) would become quite purposeless.

Note:

Gita III—33 states that even a man of clear theoretical knowledge of Atman is compelled by his Samskaras to go their way; he is fettered hand and

foot by Samskaras. Thus the question becomes relevant: What then is the scope for Sastras? If he is so bound, how can the light of Sastras prevail on him?

२४०. अयं पुरुषकारस्य शास्त्रस्य च विषयः शास्त्रार्थे प्रवृत्तः पूर्वमेव रागद्वेषयोर्वशं नागच्छेत् । या हि पुरुषस्य प्रकृतिः सा रागद्वेष-पुरस्सरैव स्वकार्ये पुरुषं प्रवर्तयति, तदा स्वधर्मपरित्यागः पर-धर्मानुष्ठानं च भवति । यदा पुनः रागद्वेषौ तत्प्रतिपक्षेण नियामयति, तदा शास्त्रदृष्टिरेव पुरुषो भवति न प्रकृतिवशः ।

G. III-34.

Here lies the scope for personal exertion and for the Sastras (sacred teachings). One following Sastra should from the very beginning rise above the sway of likes and dislikes. For what we speak of as the nature (Prakriti) of a person draws him to its course through love and aversion. There he neglects his own duties and sets about doing those of others.

When, on the other hand, a person restrains these feelings by means of their opposites, he becomes mindful of Sastras only, no longer subject to his nature.

Note:

Samskaras generate in the mind likes and dislikes. The liking for the sense-pleasures must be counteracted by love of God; one draws outward, the other inward. Love of God should consciously be cultivated to quell desires. Or a man should cultivate equanimity in face of these likes and dislikes, thus counteracting the waves in the mind. It is these restraints which counteract the likes and dislikes of the mind, that constitute true acts, according to Sastras. Restraint is the way pointed out by the Sastras.

२४१. यतन्तः—इन्द्रियोपसंहारश्मदमदयाहिंसादिलक्षणैः प्रयतन्तः।
G. 9-14.

“Striving” means making effort by subjugating the senses, by cultivating internal and external control over oneself, kindness, non-violence and the like.

२४२. तस्मादिदं धर्म्यामृतं मुमुक्षुणा यत्नेन अनुष्ठेयम् ।
G. 12-20.

Therefore this immortal law should be zealously practised by every seeker of Liberation.

Note:

The qualities of the Bhakta given in Sloka Nos. 13-19 of Chapter XII of Gita, are the things to be cultivated and practised. This Dharma alone confers immortality, not other Dharmas mentioned in Karma Sastras.

२४३. न हि इच्छाद्वेषदोषवशीकृतचित्तस्य यथाभूतार्थविषयज्ञानं उत्पद्यते
बहिः अपि, किमु वक्तव्यं ताभ्यामाविष्टबुद्धेः समूढस्य प्रत्य-
गात्मनि बहु प्रतिबद्धे ज्ञानं न उत्पद्यते इति ।

G. 7-27.

To one whose mind is subject to evils of desire and aversion there cannot indeed arise a knowledge of things as they are even of the external world; it needs no saying that, to a man whose intellect is overpowered by passion there cannot arise a knowledge of the innermost Self, in as much as there are many obstacles on its way.

Note:

In a tank full of waves the bottom cannot be seen. So also in a mind tossed by passions, the inner truth cannot be seen.

२४४(ए) भूतं ब्रह्म जिज्ञासितव्यं, नित्यत्वात् न पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रम्
S. B. 1-1-1.

(बी) यथाभूतब्रह्मविषयं ज्ञानं, न चोदनातन्त्रं यथा अक्षार्थसंनिक-
र्षेण अर्थावबोधो (तद्वत्)
S. B. 1-1-1.

(सी) नतु वस्तु एवं नैवं, अस्ति नास्ति, इति वा विकल्प्यते
S. B. 1-1-2.

(डी) नतु वस्तुयाथात्म्यज्ञानं पुरुषबुद्ध्यपेक्षं, किं तर्हि, वस्तुतन्त्रमेव
तत्। ब्रह्मज्ञानमपि वस्तुतन्त्रमेव, भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात्।
S. B. 1-1-2.

(a) Brahman exists; the desire should be to know it. It is eternal. It does not depend on any activity of man.

(b) A knowledge of the reality of Brahman does not depend on any activity of man. When an object is near the eye, the eye sees it, so also is the knowledge of Brahman.

(c) There is no alternative in Truth, as "it is so," "it is not so" or "it is," "it is not".

(b) The true knowledge of any object is not dependent on the mental activity of man. It depends on the nature of the object. Similarly the knowledge of Brahman also is dependent on the nature of the thing itself, as it too relates to an existing thing.

Note:

The idea of realising one's Atman is extremely difficult. It is called Atma-Jnana, knowledge of Atman. Even though the necessity for personal effort is emphasised in Nos. 188 to 193, that there is no trace of personal effort in Atma Jnana, is the theme here. A reference is made to an experience to illustrate

the subject matter. An object is within the ken of the eye. The eye sees it. The seeing is not an act or the result of an act. It is a natural functioning of the eye; by this functioning of the eye, the knowledge of the right form of the object arises in man. True knowledge results from the natural functionings of the sense-organs of man. And this knowledge corresponds to the true form of the object. So this knowledge which corresponds to or is dependent on the object is called वस्तुतन्त्र (depending on the object). But when the eyes have, say, jaundice, the white colour of the object is seen as yellow, which does not correspond to the truth. The straying from the truth has arisen from the defect of the eye or the defect of the person. Colour of the object, seen while man has jaundice, is dependent on the man. Yellow colour has come from the man i.e., is dependent on the man. So it is called पुरुषतन्त्र or बुद्धितन्त्र (dependent on man, or dependent on his mind). Seeing by the eye causes knowledge of the world. Knowledge of Brahman or the Self is similarly caused by an insight, not by the eye or any other senses but by super-consciousness, when the mind has been extremely purified of its passions. Passions of the mind are like jaundice of the eyes. What is seen with the agitations of passions becomes पुरुषतन्त्र. What is seen when the mind is not clouded by passions is वस्तुतन्त्र (thing as it is and without distortions caused by mind tossed with passions). The illustration makes clear the necessity to quell passions. The quelling of the passions of the mind is the scope of personal effort. But superconscious mind free from the least trace of passions, sees the Atman. This is knowledge and it is

वस्तुतन्त्र (Vastu Tantra). This Atman Jnana is बुद्धिग्राह्य, अतीन्द्रिय of the Gita.

The statement of Sankara that Sastras are ज्ञापक shows his highly scientific view of things and the other statement of his that ज्ञान is वस्तुतन्त्र confirms this. Thus it is clear that his view is turned to the truth of things. He is not a theologian who seeks to find justification for the texts of the Vedas. This latter aspect makes him rank among the philosophers not only of his times but of all times. These two propositions that शास्त्रं हि ज्ञापकम् and वस्तुतन्त्रं हि ज्ञानम् colour his thought very deeply. If these two propositions are thoroughly understood, it is easy to understand Sankara.

Note on No. 174 also deals with this matter, as in No. 244 i.e. this section.

Atman—a self-evident entity

Introduction:

In this section a subtle idea is dealt with regarding the self. The idea is that it is not the Vedas or Sastras that reveal the Self, but that in fact Atman is self-evident. The Self of man is “knower” of all, even of knowledge and ignorance. It is common experience to feel “I do not know this,” “I know this.” So knowledge and ignorance themselves are objects of knowledge to this “knower.” Only with this “knower” as the basis can any search for knowledge begin. Self is different from the mind. It understands the state of the mind, that it is sad, it is glad, etc. But Atman is the light and the witness, far different from the consciousness of the mind.

So it is not with the aid of the Sastras that man comes to know his Self. It is never an unknown factor first, which was made known later by Sastra. But there is a mist round the Atman. Sastras aid to clear this mist. One cannot obtain his self for the Self is the obtainer. One cannot give up his self. It is ever-existent and self-evident first principle. This is the gist of the section.

२४५. यश्चान्यो विज्ञानस्य गृहीता, स आत्मा, ज्योतिरन्तरं विज्ञानात्। Br. 4-4-7.

And that other entity which reveals consciousness is the Self, the intelligence, different from the consciousness.

२४६. आत्मा नाम कस्यचित् कदाचित् अप्रसिद्धः प्राप्यो हेय उपादेयो वा। G. 18-50.

The Self is not a thing unknown to anybody at any time, not a thing to be reached (attained) or got rid of, or acquired.

२४७. यथा स्वदेहस्य परिच्छेदाय न प्रमाणान्तरापेक्षा, ततः आत्मन-
अन्तरतमत्वात् तदवगतिं प्रति न प्रमाणान्तरापेक्षा इत्यात्म-
ज्ञाननिष्ठा विवेकिनां सुप्रसिद्धा।

Just as there is no need for any external evidence to know one's own body, so also there is no need for any external evidence to know one's Self which is nearer than the body. So for the wise practice of Jnana is also equally well known automatically.

Note:

Meditation on Sri Rama or Sri Krishna or one's own Guru is quite possible. An image of these with their qualities come to our mind. Meditation, Nishta here, is continuous retention of the image in our mind.

How can Atma Jnana Nishta be practised as one cannot form an image of the Atman? The answer is that it is quite possible. No extraneous agent like a light or a man etc. is necessary to make one know that he has a body. Atma is much nearer and inner to man than his body. In fact it is the prime knower in us. He is the witness of all mind, Prana and body.

He is Self-evident ; nothing extraneous like sun-light or Sastra is required to know it. But this primary, Self-evident knower is mixed up with other things. These other things have to be rejected by the mind that Atman is not the body, that Atman is not mind. This experience has to be confirmed and stabilised. Atman is the simple witness of all. This idea can be practised by the mind continuously. So Atma Jnana Nishta is quite possible.

२४८. आत्मा तु प्रमाणादिव्यवहारस्य आश्रयत्वात् प्रागेव प्रमाण-
व्यवहारात्सिद्धयति । S. B. 2-3-7.

The process of valid knowledge is dependent on Atma (the knower). So Atman has to be posited before the process of knowledge commences.

२४९. ज्ञानवशेनैव ज्ञेयावगतिः इति ज्ञानं अत्यन्तप्रसिद्धं सुखादिवत्
इत्यप्युपगन्तव्यम् । G. 18-50.

An object of knowledge is apprehended through cognition; so cognition is automatically known as pleasure and the like.

२५०. अतो अत्यन्तप्रसिद्धं ज्ञानं ज्ञाता अपि अत एव प्रसिद्ध इति ।

G. 18-50.

Wherefor cognition is self-revealed, and therefore also is the cogniser self-revealed.

२५१. विवेकाविवेकौ रूपादिवत् प्रत्यक्षौ उपलभ्येते अन्तःकरणस्थौ ।

Tai. 2-8.

Like forms etc. knowledge and ignorance are objects of immediate perception but as matters within the mind.

Why Sastra then ?

२५२. आत्मविशेषं प्रति विप्रतिपत्तेः ।

S. B. 1. 1-1.

There are differences of opinion about the conception of Atman,

Note :

Regarding the nature of Atman there are different schools of thought and conflicting opinions.

६५३. इदं तु ज्ञेयं अतीन्द्रियत्वेन शब्दैकप्रमाणगम्यं, नान्यथा, अदृष्ट-
त्वात् ।

G. 13-12.

But this entity to be known, being beyond the reach of the senses, can be known solely through the instrument of knowledge called the Sabda, viz. the Vedas. Not otherwise, being beyond the senses.

Note :

Our knowledge generally is a thing outside ourselves. These are known by our five sense organs which can function only on outside things. Atma, the inner core of man, is beyond man's five senses projecting outside. But there have been Rishis who have dived deep within themselves and have gained correct experience of the soul. The record of these supersensuous experiences are

the Vedas and the Upanishads. These being a record of experiences, and not speculations of the mind, must be correct. So the conflict of opinions is given a quietus by the hard experience of the Rishis recorded in Sastras. Thus the function of the Sastras or the Vedas is to reduce this conflict of opinions regarding the soul, on the basis of experience. Aparoksha Anubhuti (experience beyond the eyes or the senses) settles all conflicts. This record of supersensuous experience of Rishis is called "Sabda". No inference can have authority against perception.

२५४. शास्त्रं तु अन्त्यं प्रमाणं अतद्धर्मधियारोपणमात्रनिवर्तकत्वेन
प्रामाण्यमात्मना प्रतिपद्यते, न तु अज्ञातार्थज्ञापकत्वेन ।

G. 2-18.

Indeed the Scripture (Sastra) which is the final (or later) authority obtains its authoritativeness regarding the Self by simply serving to eliminate the Adhyaropa or superimposition (on the self) of the attributes alien to the Self; but not by revealing, what has been altogether unknown.

Note:

As stated in note 253 Sastra or Sabda is the final authority which gives final quietus to all wrong speculations on Atman. On the express statement of the Vedas on a subject (here Atman) all other opinions have to be discarded. So this is final authority. It is not Atma that was unknown before the Vedas made it known to us. From the very first Atman was known. But there were some cobwebs over that Atman. Sastras remove these cobwebs alone. Atma then shines, and then is correctly known.

२५५. नैसर्गिको मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तको अध्यासः
सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः । अस्य अनर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय आत्मैकत्व-
विद्याप्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ताः आरभ्यन्ते ।

S. B. Intr. 4.

This superimposition (on the pure soul) taking the form of the illusory idea, that one has to do things and enjoy results from them, is a part of our very nature. It is within the experience of all. For removing this cause of evil and realising the One (and only) Soul, are all the Vedantas (Upanishads) begun.

Note:

One of the cobwebs over the Atman that was removed by Sastra was the idea of actorship. Man is born with the idea that he has no bliss and has to work for it and obtain it and enjoy it. So he starts with work and actorship. Upanishads tell him that Atman is the fountain of bliss and that he has to know his real state. Actorship and 'enjoyership' are false and are to be discarded. Sastra gave him the idea that actorship has to be given up.

Nature of Atman

२५६. आत्मा च ब्रह्म ।

S. B. 1 1-1.

Atman the Self is Brahman.

२५७. मोक्षस्य नित्यत्वात् अनारभ्यत्वम् ।

G. 6 Intr.

Moksha being eternal cannot be the production of any Action (ritual).

Note:

Freedom is natural to the soul. Soul does not acquire it by Brahma Vidya. This is expressed in different aspects in 258, 259 and 260.

२५८. अद्वयत्वात् अविषयत्वात् आत्मत्वाच्च (इदं ज्ञेयं) न केनचित् शब्देन उच्यत इति युक्तम् ।

G. 13-2.

So it is right to say that it is one without a second; it is no object (of any of our senses); it is the very Self. This (thing to be known) cannot be denoted by any word at all.

२५९. न हि नित्यं वस्तु कर्मणा ज्ञानेन वा क्रियते ।

G. 18-66.

Indeed the eternal reality is produced neither by realisation nor by word.

२६०. न हि पारमार्थिकं वस्तु कर्तुं निवर्तयितुं वाऽर्हति ब्रह्मविद्या ।

Br. 1. 4-10.

Indeed the knowledge of Brahman does not create nor put a stop to a real entity.

२६१. रूपाद्यभावात् हि नायमर्थः प्रत्यक्षगोचरः लिंगाद्यभावाच्च, न अनुमानादीनाम् ।

S. B. II 1-6.

Having no form etc., this thing (the Self) is not an object of direct perception by any sense and not possessing any indicative mark it does not become a subject of inference.

Note:

This gives reasons why Atman is known only by Sabda. Self or Brahman has no form, no smell, no sound, no body, etc. So senses cannot grasp it. So it is beyond senses. Nor has it any indicating mark like fire its smoke. With the help of smoke we reason there is fire. But as there is no such indicating mark to Self, it is beyond reason also. Hence the necessity for a third Pramana like Sabda.

२६२. न हि अन्यत्वं जीवस्य ईश्वरादुपपद्यते ।

S. B. III 2-6.

It is not proper to state that the Jiva is different from Isvara (the Lord).

२६३. अभावः शरीरेन्द्रियाणां मोक्षे ।

S. B. IV 4-10.

In Moksha (state of liberation) there is no body or organs

Note:

This is the difference in the idea of Moksha between Mimamsakas and Dvaitins on the one hand, and Advaitins on the other. Mimamsakas do not conceive of bodylessness to the Soul in Heaven or the Dvaitin in Vaikunta.

Nature of Jnana

Introduction:

Ruminating over the passage in this section will lead to fuller and more correct and clearer intellectual grasp of Self and will be helpful to meditation on Self.

२६४. परमार्थतत्त्वविषयं ज्ञानं एकमेवेदं सर्वं ब्रह्म अकर्तृ च इति ।

G. II-11. Intr.

The form taken by the realisation of the Grand Truth is "All this is One, the Brahman, the Absolute, and Non-doer."

२६५. बाह्यलाभनिरपेक्षः परमार्थदर्शनामृतरसलाभेन अन्यस्मादलं प्रत्ययवान् स्थितप्रज्ञः ।

G. II-55.

One without any concern to gain anything from outside and because of his acquisition of the immortal

nectar, the realisation of the Supreme Truth, is averse to everything else—such a one has steadfast Jnana.

२६६. न च मिथ्याज्ञानं परमार्थवस्तु दूषयितुं समर्थम् । अविद्या क्षेत्रज्ञस्य न किञ्चित्कर्तुं शक्नोति ।

G. 13 Intr.

Illusory idea or knowledge has no power to affect the real thing. Avidya can do nothing to Kshetrajna.

Note:

“Ignorance” contaminates our mind, but it has no power to soil the Atman. Atman remains ever pure in spite of impurity of mind.

२६७. अविद्यायाः निवर्तकं सम्यग्दर्शनम् ।

G. 13-27 Intr.

True realisation or knowledge removes ignorance (Avidya)

Note:

Light alone can dispel darkness.

२६८. एषणाव्युत्थानावसानमेव हि तत्पाण्डित्यम् ।

Br. 3. 5-1.

That scholarship or knowledge is the final culmination of the renunciation of desires.

Note:

Real knowledge or wisdom is not deep and on vast scholarship. It is rising up completely from above the passions that mar the mind of man.

२६९. अक्रियामात्रत्वात् व्युत्थानस्य ।

Ait. Intr. P, 14.

Renunciation is the mere giving up of actions.

२७०. क्रियायामिव वस्तुनि विकल्पस्यासंभवात् ।

S. B. I-4-15

There can be no alternatives in (the right conception of) Reality as in Karma (action or ritual).

Note:

See note on No. 40.

Steps to Atma Jnana

२७१. कर्मयोगः, सत्त्वशुद्धिः, ज्ञानप्राप्तिः, सर्वकर्मसंन्यासः, ज्ञान-
निष्ठा क्रमेण शान्तिः ।

G.V. 12-26.

The stages of Atmajnana in order are Karma Yoga, purity of mind, then attainment of knowledge, then renunciation of actions and lastly Jnana Nishta (Meditation) ending in the Peace of Self-realisation.

२७२. कर्मनिष्ठायाः ज्ञाननिष्ठाप्राप्तिहेतुत्वेन पुरुषार्थहेतुत्वं न
स्वातन्त्र्येण ।

Action with detachment (Karma Nishta) is an intermediate means to the end, namely devotion to knowledge and not independently (to the final end, realisation).

Note:

Karma generally causes bondage and so is antagonistic to knowledge and attainment of freedom. But Karma done with detachment to fruits as Karma Yoga is a means to attainment of purity of mind and becomes helpful to Jnana Nishta. Karma as Yoga thus fulfils itself. So Karma should be done as Yoga and not merely as Karma. Karma Yoga thus leads to the highest goal.

२७३. ज्ञाननिष्ठा तु कर्मनिष्ठोपायलब्धात्मका सती स्वातन्त्र्येण पुरुषार्थहेतुः अन्यानपेक्षा ।

G. 3-4 Intr.

But Jnana Nishta which is attained with the help of unattached action (Karma Nishta) leads to the goal directly without extraneous aid.

Note :

Jnana Nishta leads directly to the highest goal.

२७४. कर्मरंभस्य एव नैष्कर्म्योपायत्वात् ।

G. 3-4

Only performance of action becomes the means for attaining freedom from activity.

Note :

For Karma Yoga, Karma is necessary. The attitude of detachment can be exercised only then. Only when a needy man comes, can the feeling of charity be exercised. Only when desires arise can they be eradicated. Thus Karma Yoga leads to total cessation of Karma, when first the desire for fruit is stopped; then the desire itself dies at last. Then there is no call to Karma.

२७५. न ह्युपायमन्तरेण उपेयप्राप्तिरस्ति । कर्मयोगोपायत्वं च नैष्कर्म्यलक्षणस्य ज्ञानयोगस्य ।

Certainly there is no attainment of the end except by proper means. Jnana Yoga, characterised by cessation of activity, has for its means Karma Yoga.

Note :

Note on No. 274 will help in understanding this also.

२७६. ध्यानयोगो सम्यग्दर्शनस्य अन्तरङ्गम् ।

G. 5-27 Intr.

Dhyana Yoga is the proximate means to the right comprehension (of the Self).

Note:

This is a very important statement. This has always to be remembered to understand Jnana Yoga. Jnana Yogi is not the clever expounder of Upanishads and Gita but an adept in the meditation of the Self. Right meditation is the culminating point in all Yogas.

२७७. अज्ञानामेव हि कर्मयोगो न ज्ञानिनाम् ।

G. 3-5.

Karma Yoga is meant for the ignorant (of Self) only, not the wise.

Note:

The other feature of Jnana Yoga is the cessation of rituals and external activities. These are for the "ignorant".

२७८. न निवृत्तमिध्याज्ञानिनां आत्मज्ञाननिष्ठाव्यतिरेकेण अन्यत् कार्यमस्ति ।

G. 3-10 Intr.

For those free from illusory knowledge there is nothing else to be practised than Jnana Nishta.

Note:

The illusory knowledge is that one is the body, Prana and mind. The idea of pure Atman, the "witness" has not dawned in his mind.

२७९. अग्निहोत्रादिकर्म फलनिरपेक्षमनुष्ठीयमानं, ध्यानयोगारोहण-साधनत्वं सत्त्वशुद्धिद्वारेण प्रतिपद्यते ।

G. VI. Intr.

Action such as Agnihotra, done without desire for fruits, by purifying the mind becomes a means to rise up to Dhyana Yoga.

Note:

Not merely social duties but rituals as well can be used as the field for the practice of Karma Yoga.

२८०. कर्मजा सिद्धिः ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यतालक्षणा ।

G. 18-46 to 49.

The perfection or purity born of doing action qualifies a man to become fit for Jnana Nishta.

Note:

Perfect success in Karma Yoga is the pathway to Jnana Nishta. In No. 274 the same topic is expressed differently. Nos. 280, 281 and 282 give the successive stages in the attainment of purity of mind till the highest realisation, Samyak Darshana is reached.

२८१. तस्याः फलभूता नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिः ज्ञाननिष्ठालक्षणा ।

G. 18-49-Intr.

The fruit thereof (Karma Yoga) is perfection in the form of absolute freedom from action known as Jnana Nishta.

२८२. नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिः परमां, कर्मजसिद्धिविलक्षणां, सद्योमुक्त्यवस्थानरूपां सम्यग्दर्शनेन प्राप्नोति ।

G. 18-19.

The attainment of freedom from action (or the state of actionless Self) is supreme, as distinguished from the perfection resulting from Karma Yoga; it is a state of immediate Liberation (Sadyo Mukti). This is attained by right Realisation.

Jnana Paripaka

Introduction :

The clearing of the mists of mind, and the attainment of more and more purity by way of detachment from the body idea and so on, is a gradual process of growth and ripening “Paripaka”, the congenial atmosphere for the growth of this moral excellence. Thus ethical perfection is one of the important factors for realisation of the self.

२८३. ज्ञानस्य स्वात्मोत्पत्तिपरिपाकहेतुयुक्तस्य प्रतिपक्षविहीनस्य यत्
आत्मानुभवनिश्चयावसानत्वं तस्य निष्ठाशब्दाभिलापः ।

G. 18-55.

The word “Jnana Nishta” means that knowledge aided by all the favourable conditions of its rise and *development or ripening*, and freed from obstacles culminates in a firm conviction by one’s own experience.

Note :

283 and 295 are the same. The purpose here is to emphasise that final attainment is not a sudden onset, as it were. Jnana Nishta sprouts up in the congenial atmosphere of the purity born of Karma Yoga. Then there is a period of Paripaka development and ripening. This aspect is emphasised here. Other will be taken up later.

२८४. ज्ञानोत्पत्तिपरिपाकहेतु सहकारिकारणं बुद्धिविशुद्धि अमानि-
त्वादि च अपेक्ष्य जनित स्वात्मानुभवनिश्चयरूपेण यदवस्थानं
सा परा ज्ञाननिष्ठा ।

G. 18-55.

Knowledge arising and ripening under favourable attendant causes namely purity of mind etc. (18-51 to 55)

and humility (13-7 to 11) and then culminating in the firm conviction by one's own experience is Jnana Nishta. (Attainment of the Supreme consummation of knowledge and meditation.

Note :

This state, the ripening, takes place along with the cultivation of ethical excellences etc., twelve in number stated in Chapter XVIII, slokas 51 to 55, as well as twenty in number in Chapter XIII, slokas 7 to 11. There are not the material causes like clay for the pot, but only instrumental causes like potter or wheel whose presence is essential for the birth of the pot. Though clay is the cause of the pot, it is very essential, that other factors like potter and wheel should also operate in the production of the pot. Thus ethical excellences are as the wheel and the potter, for the ripening of Jnana. The factor for ripening and their relation to it are given here. Ethical excellences do not add to the natural purity of the Atman though essential for realisation. Another important point is that this growth, ripening and perfection, can be experienced. This experience gives one certainty—bliss of mind and self satisfaction.

२८५. मोक्षसाधनभूतात्मज्ञानपरिपाकार्थत्वात् संन्यासस्य ।

Br. 4 4-7

The purpose of Sanyasa (renunciation) is to mature or rippen Self-Knowledge, the means of liberation.

Note :

The reference to Paripaka (ripening) occurs not only in Gita but in Brihadaranyaka also. The emphasis

on this point is repeated, and not assumption of Sanyasa is recommended, as a help to this Paripaka.

२८६. परया भक्त्या भगवन्तं तत्त्वतो अभिजानाति, यदनन्तरमेव ईश्वरक्षेत्रज्ञभेदबुद्धिरशेषतो निवर्तते ।

G. 18-55.

By Supreme Jnana Nishta is the Lord known as He is, and only afterwards all consciousness of difference between Isvara and Kshetrajna disappears altogether.

Note:

For Bhakti Yogis also first comes this Paripaka and then realisation of his identity with the divine. Then only identity of Atman and God takes place. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa first realised his Mother. His Mother and he were separate. Only when Totapuri came he realised Advaita, that he and the Mother are one and not different.

२८७. ज्ञानसाधनानां भावनापरिपाकनिमित्तं तत्त्वज्ञानम् ।

G. 13-11.

The realisation of Truth results when the practice or meditation of the means (humility etc.) attains maturity. The means are but attendant causes.

Note:

Here again is a reference to Paripaka in another context. Realisation of Truth ensues from it.

Jnana Nishta

Introduction:

This section gives the summit of spiritual practice. The highest endeavours for perfecting personality are stated in this section. Thus it is natural

that is comes in the final part, after all aspects of the problem of religion have been viewed.

२८८. नियुक्तस्य च अस्मिन्नधिकृतोऽहम् कर्ता, मयेदं कर्तव्यं, इति अवश्यं ब्रह्मप्रत्ययात् विपरीतप्रत्ययः उत्पद्यते ।

S. B. 4. 1-2.

“I am qualified (to act), I have been enjoined (to do) this, I am the doer, this action has to be done by me”—these ideas generate ideas which are quite inconsistent with the idea—I am Brahman.

Note :

The attitude of mind that prompts one to do an Adrishta Karma (a ritual with unseen result) and the attitude of mind while engaged in Jnana Nishta (Jnana Yoga) are entirely different. “I am a doer”, i. e. I have something to get from outside, “I have the power and desire to do it,” “This is the course prescribed by the Vedas for this purpose.”—These other components of ‘doership’ occur in the mind of a Karmi. The ideas that desire are our greatest enemies and that self requires nothing to be added to, or to be taken off from these ideas, find no place yet in his mind. The course prescribed in the rituals is most conventional and there is no room for any question, why this detail comes, or why that. If a question is asked, the only reply is “Vedas have prescribed it.” The action is in a sense mechanical. At the end, one does not know whether one has come by the result or not, a very important distinction.

In Jnana Nishta the “I” itself has to be dissolved. The waves of the mind have to be calmed, desires have to disappear, nothing external is to be gained. The Sadhaka knows every inch of his progress or

regress that, "the mind is more calm or less calm." He knows at last the mind is placid. The "witness" shines in his blissfulness and glory. He has lost the sense of body. All this is स्वसंवेद्यम् न परप्रत्यक्षम्.....full and certain conviction has arisen in himself, known only to himself and not capable of being seen by others." Are not the two attitudes and experiences of the mind occurring during Karma or Jnana quite different?

२८९. दृश्यन्ते हि सकृत्श्रुतात् वाक्यात् मन्दप्रतीतिं वाक्यार्थं आवर्तयन्तः तत्तदाभासव्युदासेन सम्यक् प्रतीयमानाः ।

S. B. 4.1-2.

We do see that the meaning of a sentence which was faintly understood when heard once, when repeatedly heard becomes well-understood bereft of its haziness.

Note:

The Phala (fruit) of Karma is अदृष्ट "not to be seen here but only after death," while in Jnana Nishta it is entirely different, e. g. We read a sentence. Its meaning is not clear to us. We think over the meaning, perhaps ask others to explain it. Then at last we know it and are satisfied. Thus "ignorance" is दृष्ट and its removal by Jnana also "seen". There is great satisfaction when ignorance is removed. This is also "seen". Result of Karma, being an unseen, unexperienced thing, may be doubted, but the result of Jnana being of the category "seen" प्रत्यक्ष cannot be doubted.

२९०. ससाधनं कर्म संन्यस्य शरीरयात्रामात्रचेष्टो यतिः ज्ञाननिष्ठो मुच्यते ।

G. 4-21. Intr.

The devotee, who renouncing all action with its accessories, except what is necessary for bare bodily maintenance, is steadfast in his devotion to knowledge, gets liberated.

Note:

All rights, rituals, ceremonies, i. e. all Karmas are dropped by a Sanyasin, a Jnana Nishta. But Sankara to ward off a misunderstanding on the part of Sadhakas says "there is minimum activity left to maintain the body." This much activity may be kept up to help us to realise. All Sadhanas are only to last while one lives embodied.

२९१. न, निवृत्तमिथ्याज्ञानिनां, आत्मज्ञाननिष्ठाव्यतिरेकेण, अन्यत्
कार्यमस्ति । G. 4-17. Intr.

Those who are free from illusory knowledge have nothing else to do than resort to steadfast devotion to Self-Knowledge.

Note :

The effort to keep the mind quiet and untossed is correct but not rituals.

२९२. ज्ञानसाधनगणः अमानित्वादिः, यत्परः संन्यासी ज्ञाननिष्ठः
उच्यते ।

G. 18-7. Intr.

The various means to Realisation (of the Self) are virtues like humility etc. (G. 13-7 to 11). Intent on these a Sanyasi becomes Jnana Nishta.

२९३. परा ज्ञाननिष्ठा कथं कार्या ।

G. 18-51. Intr.

How is this consummation of knowledge to be worked out ?

Note:

The attention is here drawn to the word कार्य (to be worked out). Sankara is charged as advocating quietism. Jnana Nishta is not quietism for a Sadhaka makes enormous effort to control his mind. Calmness and placidity of mind come in the last phase. Here too there is activity not external but internal Nivritti Karma.

२९४. ज्ञाननिष्ठा ज्ञानावृत्तिलक्षणा ।

Devotion to knowledge means a repetition of knowledge (meditation).

Note:

Ritualistic Karma is generally done once, unless otherwise directed. Jnana Nishta being meditation, the ideas have to flow continuously; meditation has to be done repeatedly till the goal is reached. Repetition is the peculiar feature of meditation, not of Vedic rituals.

२९५. ज्ञानस्य स्वात्मोत्पत्तिपरिपाकहेतुयुक्तस्य स्वात्मानुभवनिश्चय-
रूपेण अवस्थानं ज्ञाननिष्ठा ।

Jnana Nishta consists of steadfast meditation, aided by by all the favourable conditions of its rise and ripening, culminating in a firm conviction by one's own experience.

Note

See note on No. 233. Here the emphasis is on repetition. When is this repetition of meditation to stop? When the great conviction is born by experience by realisation, the Sadhaka knows and feels satisfied "that he has won the goal."

२९६. प्रत्यगात्म-अविक्रियस्वरूपनिष्ठत्वाच्च मोक्षस्य ।

Moksha accrues from the intense concentration of the true nature of the calm Inner Self.

२९७. मुक्तावस्था हि सर्ववेदान्तेषु एकरूपैवावधार्यते । ब्रह्मैव हि मुक्तावस्था ।

The state of the Liberated is of one form only in all Vedantas. In the liberated state one is Brahman.

२९८. न देशकालनिमित्तापेक्षो मोक्षः कर्मफलवत् भवितुमर्हति ।

S.B. 4. 1-13.

Moksha (liberation) which is not dependent on space, time or causation cannot be like the fruit of action.

Note:

A Vaidika Karma has a prescribed time, place and cause. Jnana Nishta is not fettered by any of these factors. So necessarily the result too has to be of a different nature.

२९९. दर्शनपर्यवसानानि हि श्रवणादीनि आवर्त्यमानानि दृष्टार्थानि भवन्ति । यथावघातादीनि हि तण्डुलादिनिष्पत्तिपर्यवसानानि तद्वत् ।

S. B. 4 1-1.

Hearing etc. (thinking and meditating of Brahman) which are meant to culminate in seeing (realising) the Self, when repeated, result in direct experience just as the husking of paddy etc., are seen to end palpably on the coming out of the grain.

Note

When should meditation for the attainment of Jnana cease? When does the process of husking paddy stop? When the rice emerges. If at the first threshing the rice comes out, the threshing may stop with

that one act. If it dose not come even after nine efforts, it has to be repeated until the grain emerges out. This emerging out of rice settles the repetition in threshing. So also in Jnana Nishta. Number of the repetitions cannot be previously stated or prescribed. All that can be said is that repetition has to continue till one experiences the dawn of knowledge. In Karmas the repetition of an action is for the definite time enjoined by the Vedas.

३००. निदिर्नीयासनं च अन्तर्नीता आवृत्तिगुणैव क्रियाभिधीयते ।

S. B. 4. 1-1i.

Nididhyasana (concentration or meditaton) is in the nature of repetition (of idea) carried within.

३०१. परब्रह्मविषयेऽपि प्रत्यये तदुपाय उपदेशेषु आवृत्तिसिद्धिः ।

S. B. IV 1-2.

In the subject matter of Supreme Brahman also, in teaching and the means, repetition (of ideas) is thus established.

Its fruit a Drishta one

Introduction:

After effort comes the result. Then the endeavour comes to a stop automatically. In the Vyasa Sutras also the Sadhana Chapter is III and Phala Chapter is IV and last.

३०२. अनवगमनिवृत्तेः दृष्टत्वात्, दृश्यते हि एकत्वविज्ञानादेव अनवगमनिवृत्तिः ।

Br. 1. 4-8.

We see it removes ignorance. We 'actually' see that the knowledge of unity alone dispels ignorance.

Note:

See note to 289.

३०३. अविद्यातमोनिवर्तकस्य ज्ञानस्य दृष्टकैवल्यफलावसानत्वम् ।

The fruit of knowledge (realisation) dispelling ignorance and darkness is seen to culminate in the attainment of the Absolute (Brahman).

३०४. न चायं अवगतिः अर्थिका भ्रान्तिर्वा इति शक्यते वक्तुम् ।

अविद्यानिवृत्तिफलदर्शनात् बाधकज्ञानानन्तराभावाच्च ।

S. B. 2 1-14.

It cannot be said that this knowledge is purposeless or illusory because it is seen to dispel ignorance; nothing further is seen to contradict it.

Note :

There is often the allegation against meditation that its results are all hallucination of the mind, as, say, in a delirium or dream. The assertion of Sankara here is to meet this charge.

The man is no more a slave to desires, he is extremely calm and joyful. These qualities he did not have before. Not only this but these traits of his are not momentary but remain to continue as a part of his nature permanently. How have these come about? By realisation, the new insight.

३०५. अविद्यापगममात्रत्वात् ब्रह्मप्राप्तिफलस्य ।

Br. 1. 4-10.

The realisation of Brahman is brought about by the mere cessation of ignorance.

३०६. अक्रियामात्रत्वात् व्युत्थानस्य ।

Ait. Intr. P-14.

Renunciation is the mere giving up of actions.

३०७. व्युत्थानं तर्हि अर्थप्राप्तत्वात् न चोदनार्हम् ।

As renunciation follows as a consequence (on the dawn of this new light about the Self) it needs no specific Vedic Injunction (for the purpose).

३०८. उपलब्धुः अनुपलभ्यत्वात् ।

Tai. 3-10-4

The knower cannot become an object to be known.

Note:

The witness can never become an object of senses or the mind.

३०९. मन एव केवलं रूपज्ञाननिमित्तं योगिनाम् ।

Br. 1-4-2.

In the case of Yogins the mind alone is the cause of perception of forms, etc.

Note:

It is one of the many powers that come to a Siddha, but which is not displayed by him usually. It is recorded in Sri Ramana Maharshi's life that once he told one of his teacher-devotees who was late for his school "Go at once. Your headmaster is at the gate of the school, awaiting your arrival." The teacher started at once from the Ashram and when he reached the school gate, the headmaster was actually awaiting him. So Siddhas can perceive without the aid of the senses.

३१०. ज्ञानाभ्यासश्च प्रदानं इह यतीनां अनुष्ठेयम् ।

Br. 3-4-40.

Sanyasins have chiefly to take to the practise of knowledge (i. e. meditation on Self).

Note :

Abhyasa has been defined by Sankara in Gita (chapter VI—35), as चित्तभूमौ कस्यचित् समानप्रत्ययावृत्तिः चित्तस्य “The repetition of one idea in the field of the mind by mental effort.”

३११. स्वसंवेद्येनैव अव्यवहितेन विद्यासमर्पितेन स्वास्थ्येन तत्तिसिद्धिः।
S. B. 4, 3-14.

That (supreme realisation) is attained by that “stand in oneself” or quietitude which can be but experienced by oneself, which has no obstructions, and which is conferred by knowledge.

Note :

All the old Samskaras which draw man to senses are real obstructions to meditation of the self. In perfect meditation these obstructions should gradually but absolutely cease. This is one of the signs of right or successful meditation.

३१२. फलत्वप्रसिद्धिरपि मोक्षस्य बन्धनिवृत्तिमात्रापेक्षा न
अपूर्वजननापेक्षा ।
S. B. 4-2.

The well-known result (of knowledge) namely Moksha depends on the mere removal of bondage and not in generation of something new.

३१३. जगदुत्पत्त्यादिव्यापारं वर्जयित्वा अन्यत् अणिमाद्यात्मकं ऐश्वर्यं
मुक्तानां भवितुमर्हति । जगद्व्यापारस्तु नित्यसिद्धस्य ईश्वरस्य ।
S. B. 4. 4-17.

Excluding the activity of creating the world etc. all the other Lordly powers like “becoming minute” etc. come to the Liberated; but the power of creating the world etc. belongs solely to the ever-existent Isvara.

३१४. दृष्टार्था च विद्या प्रतिषेधाभावमात्रेण अर्थिनमधिकरोति ।

S. B. 3. 4-38.

One who has the desire for it can take to Brahma Vidya whose result can be directly experienced here, for the simple reason that there is no prohibition to do it.

Note :

Sastra prescribes certain qualifications, like being a Brahmin or Kshatriya, etc., for the performance of rituals. Not so in the case of Jnana. He who has a desire for it may take it up, for this belongs to Karma with "seen" results,

३१५. परया भक्त्या भगवन्तं तत्त्वतो अभिजानाति, यदनन्तरमेव ईश्वरक्षेत्रज्ञभेदबुद्धिरशेषतो निवर्तते ।

G. 18-55.

By supreme Jnana Nishta is the Lord known as He is, and only afterwards all consciousness of difference between Isvara and the individual self disappears altogether.

Note :

This is the same as 286.

३१६. ज्ञानस्य अविद्यानिवर्तकत्वे सति, दृष्टकैवल्यफलावसानत्वात् ।

G. 18-66.

That Jnana by removing Avidya (ignorance) culminates in the Absolute state (the self) is a result which can be experienced.

Note :

When the seeming attachments of the self to the body, to mind with all its passions and to Buddhi with all its various decisions, have ceased and Atman remains

absolutely unsoiled and unattached, this state ends in positive experience and certainty that all is bliss.

३१७. भ्रान्तिप्रत्ययनिमित्तमेवायं संसारभ्रमो न तु परमार्थः इति सम्यग्दर्शनादत्यन्तमेवोपरम इति सिद्धम् ।

G. 18-66.

The illusion of Samsara is due solely to an illusory notion and is not absolutely real. So the conclusion is clear that the right knowledge conduces to the absolute cessation of Samsara.

Note :

In reality, all the illusions of the mind are while it has its attachment to the world. This attachment to body and mind and the world is not a reality. All these attachments cease on realisation. This is the net conclusion of Vedanta Sastra.

३१८. शरीरारम्भकस्य कर्मणो नियतफलत्वात् सम्यक् ज्ञानप्राप्तौ अप्यवश्यंभाविनी प्रवृत्तिः वाङ्मनःकायानां, लब्धवृत्तेः कर्मणो बलीयस्त्वात्, मुक्तेश्वादिप्रवृत्तिवत्, तेन पक्षे प्राप्तं ज्ञानप्रवृत्ति-दौर्बल्यं, तस्मात् त्यागवैराग्यादिसाधनबलावलंबनेन आत्म-विज्ञानस्मृतिसंततिः नियन्तव्या भवति । न अपूर्वा कर्तव्या ।

Br. 1. 4-7.

Since the resultant of past actions that led to the formation of the present body must produce definite results, speech, mind and body are bound to function even after strong and clear conviction of self-knowledge. For actions that are bearing fruit are stronger than faith in the knowledge of the self; as for instance an arrow that has been let fly continues its course for some time. Hence the operation of knowledge being weaker than they (is liable to be overpowered by them, and) becomes the only possible

alternative, Therefore there is need to regulate the train of remembrance of the knowledge of self by having recourse to means such as renunciation and dispassion. This train (of remembrance etc.) is not to be understood and performed as a Vedic rite.

Note :

पूर्व is old, i. e. natural desire as for eating, sleep, fear, etc. अपूर्व is not old, new, not born out of instincts like the acts mentioned above (cultured habits) Vedic Karmas do not spring from instinctive impulse Unless the Vedas prescribe them, one will not know them. So they are called Apurva Karmas. In their details etc. the only guidance is the Vedas. The directions of the Vedas have to be obeyed and no questions asked. Their results are “unseen”.

This Jnana Nishta is not like that. All explanations in this note relate to the last three words of No. 318.

The rest explains why there should be the exercise of ethics. Rituals are a sort of Karma. They are Pravritti Karma. Control of mind and passions is Nivritti Karma. If rituals are to be abandoned why not control of mind also. The passage explains the necessity for ethics, as also the abandonment of Pravritti Karma.

३१९. सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तैकचैतन्यात्मको अहं इत्येष आत्मानुभवः ।
न चैवं आत्मानमनुभवतः किञ्चिदन्यत्कृत्यं अवशिष्यते ।

S.B. IV. 1-2.

The experience of the self culminates in the consciousness that one is entirely free from all miseries and one's nature is one (undivided) consciousness.

For one who is thus experiencing the self, there is nothing else to do.

Note :

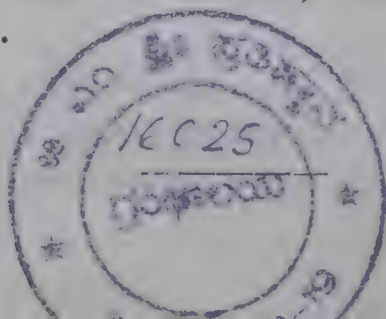
The experience of self-realisation is utter unity with all, as infinite consciousness and bliss. Then the Sadhana stops. The Sadhaka has no further Karma or duty to do. This last sentence should not be taken to mean that there will be no flow of beneficial activities from them. But they will flow just like the fragrance from the flower. The Buddha's activities after his realisation, or Sankara's activities to purify and make vital the Hindu religion and society, or Swami Vivekananda's magnificent activities in recent times, belong to this category. They are not even Nivritti Karma, much less Pravritti Karma. They are beyond all sastras and part of the divine activity sustaining the world.

३२०. ब्रह्मभावश्च मोक्षः ।

Moksha is (Atman) becoming identical with Brahman.

Note :

Moksha is the Atman bursting its present bonds of identification with the body and mind, then Atman comprises all. It has expanded vastly and has become Brahman. This is the Parama Purushartha, the supreme end of the Vedas and Hindus and should be that of all in the universe. This, being a Truth, is the property of all.



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In the latter part of 1934, he joined the Ramakrishna Mutt, Madras. He was initiated into Sanyas by Swami Ramdas of the Anand Asram, Kanhangad, Cannanore District in 1950. From that time, he is the Acharya of the Veda Sastra Patasala, Chittur-Cochin, where he has reorganised the Vedic studies by adding to them instructions in modern subjects as well. He is now the President of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, Kerala Branch.